

WTRC Newsletter

2024 May/June



WEST TEXAS
RUNNING CLUB
LUBBOCK, TEXAS



A rainy day at this year's
Horseshoe Bend !

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WTRC Board Members can be reached through this email address: Westtxrunning@gmail.com

Upcoming Races

FIRECRACKER RUN

Race Director: Gabby Saldana 806.281.4691

55th Annual Firecracker Run
Thursday, July 4th 2024

NOTE Earlier Start Times!!

7:30 a.m.—10K

7:32 a.m. 3-Mile

1 Mile Kid's Run approximately 9:00 a.m.

Bib pickup on Race Day – 6:45 to 7:15

RACE

LOCATION:

Coleman Park
– Brownfield,
TX



2nd Saturday in August

HOT Dam!

7:30 a.m. start time

5 Mi & 2 Mi

Bib pickup on race day only, 6:45 – 7:15am

RACE LOCATION

Canyon Lakes #6: 22nd & MLK Jr Blvd

Start by the waterfall on MLK & 22nd St.


Hot
DAM RUN

Race Director:
Wendy Johnston
806.544.5966

Remembering WTRC Founder

Gene Adams October 14, 1934 – April 15, 2024

Gene H. Adams passed away on April 15, 2024 after a long illness. He was born on October 14, 1934 in Vineland, N.J. to Myrtle Reed Adams and Harold Adams.



What we know as the West Texas Running Club began in the summer of 1972 – 52 years ago – not in Lubbock but in Brownfield, Texas. Gene had moved to Brownfield because of his job as a Chemical (Petroleum Refining Engineering) Engineer with Amoco (originally Standard Oil Company). There was no money from the family for Gene to go to college – none of his family, even the brothers – went to college. In fact, none of them graduated from High School except for Gene. Gene wanted to go to college so he enlisted in the Army – was a part of the Ordinance Corp. – and did so for 3 years so he could earn a larger amount of the G.I. Bill which he used to fund a Bachelor's degree as well as a Master's degree in Petroleum Refining Engineering from Colorado School of Mines (*btw – Gene was a member of Mensa International*). Gene graduated from college in 1963.



Gene worked for Shell Oil Co. after college in 1964 and heard that Shell was closing the Tulsa office where he was – Gene would have to move to someplace like Montana..... So, Gene went across the street, interviewed at Amoco, and was immediately hired. Later on it was from Tulsa that Gene was transferred to Brownfield where he, as was his custom, looked for places to run. Gene saw that the high school had a track. Back then these tracks weren't as nice as they are today – that track was an "oil/sand" composition – and so Gene began running laps in the evenings as the high school runners were finishing up. James Morris (of later South Plains College track fame) was the track coach and he was curious about the guy running laps. In their conversation Gene asked if James knew of any local running clubs which, of course, there were none. Gene asked James if he thought they both could begin a club. James didn't think enough people would be interested. But, James had been hosting a local race during the summer – July 4th – mainly to give his high school runners incentive to train during the summer – this was the Brownfield "Firecracker Run." Gene suggested they publicize the new club at the July 4th, 1972 race and several people signed up for it. The second race offered by the new club was a 5 miler in August at Brownfield's Coleman Park – more people signed up – thus the beginning of the West Texas Running Club! At the end of the year Gene estimated there were 30-40 club members.

There will be, at the end of this year, almost 700 WTRC members – from humble beginnings.....!

Gene was president, secretary, treasurer, often race director, newsletter editor and mailer, recorded all the times and other things necessary to put on races. The number of races grew and were hosted in several area cities which is how the club grew in membership more quickly than if it had been confined to Lubbock and Brownfield.

For more on how Gene began and grew the WTRC as well as spawned running clubs in those surrounding West Texas cities read this article: https://wtrunning.com/2014/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Newsletter-May_June2018.pdf.

Thank you Gene! Your influence lives on in today's West Texas Running Club.



The people we surround ourselves with matter!

My First Marathon...

an interview with WTRC Member Tommie Gressett

1. *Tell us about yourself -- where you grew up and where you went to school. Were you into sports earlier in your life? I especially enjoyed hearing the story of how you and Gary became acquainted and ultimately married if you wouldn't mind relating that?*

I grew up in the Farmers Branch/Carrollton area, and moved to Lamesa, TX when I was a sophomore in high school. That was a tough change at that age. The plus side of that was that we were now around extended family. I never played sports in school and wasn't around any girls that played sports. The only one in my family that played sports was my brother, and we were all at his football and baseball games in our elementary years. That was just the norm for that era, as far as I knew. In 1985, I was living near Houston, working for an oilfield related company. At that time, a lot of those companies were going out of business. I had worked for several that had closed. I moved to Big Spring, TX where my Mom lived to go to school to become an X-ray technologist. I figured that would be a field that would always be stable. I met Gary just as I was finishing the x-ray program. We married in 1991. In 1999, I left my job at the local hospital to go to radiation therapy school. The school was thru MD Anderson, but I was able to do all my classes and clinicals in Fort Worth. That was a very challenging year. I stayed in Ft Worth during the week and traveled home on the weekends. Gary worked shift work at the refinery in Big Spring. Once a month, he would have what we called his "long-off, and he would travel to Ft Worth on those weekends. We made the best of it. It turned out to be a time we look back on with great memories.

2. *Who are your family and maybe something about friends who are your encouragers?*

My husband, Gary has been my biggest encourager. I have made so many amazing friends in the running community here in Lubbock. Everyone is so supportive. I'm very thankful for the many different opportunities to run with other

runners here in Lubbock. When I first started running, I ran alone. Mainly because I didn't know anyone else that ran. Now I enjoy running with others and actually prefer that. I love the camaraderie and hearing about the goals and accomplishments of other runners.

3. *How did you get into running? I know you've run many WTRC races -- how long have you been a WTRC member? Do you have a favorite WTRC race (and why)?*

I eventually started doing travel work -- working at cancer centers that needed help when they were short-staffed or had employees that were out on leave. During one of my travel assignments I was staying in North Dallas. I signed up for a run training program that was sponsored by a local running store. I was looking for something to do in the evenings and a way to get in some exercise. After that, I would look for neighborhoods to run in anywhere I was working. I wish I could remember the year, but I don't. Anyway, after that, I came across the couch to 5K plan and decided to try to complete that. In early October 2009 I entered my very first race -- the *White Buffalo Stampede* in Snyder, TX. I had never even been to a 5k race, much less participated in one. I'm pretty sure I finished second to last but I finished it! In late October of 2009 I started working here in Lubbock. I started looking for places to run and local races. I came across the WTRC. In April of 2010 I talked Gary into signing

From the Editor: Tommie is one of those folks you see at the WTRC races who doesn't say a whole lot, is nice to every one she meets, and when she runs she runs at a very constant pace... just focuses on the run and keeps going until the end. A couple of years ago (who knows... time at my age doesn't have a lot of meaning... :-)) I ran with Tommie during a Saturday morning FootTech run and was able to hear some of her story. I really enjoyed it and, when I heard she was running her first marathon I hoped she wouldn't mind sharing her experience. True to her nature she agreed.... I hope you enjoy her story!

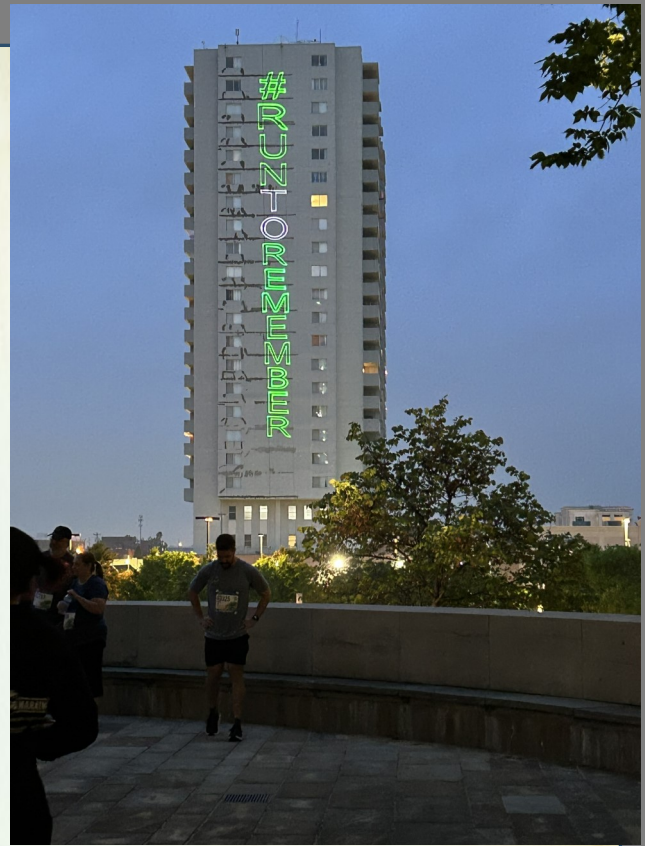


up for the Run for the Arts race together -- we did the 2 mile race. We didn't have any family here in Lubbock and didn't know anyone. I told him that it would be something to do and a way to hopefully meet some people. It has turned out to be one of the best decisions that we've ever made. I love doing the Horseshoe Bend Race because of the location. The RRRR is also a favorite because of the location, Raider Red is there as well as Champion and the Masked Rider and a DJ. After running the Mosaic Run in Levelland last year that is also a new favorite. There was so much community support and that was spectacular. I'm looking forward to doing that one again soon. (I'm not sure what year I officially joined the WTRC membership). I am so thankful for all the friends that I've made thru WTRC.

4. *I know you've run other races outside of those sponsored by the WTRC. What are a few of them and which race or races do you most enjoy?*

I ran the Rock N Roll half-marathon in San Antonio in December of 2021. That was my first large race outside of Lubbock. It was a fun experience. It was so nice to be wearing shorts in early December! I later did the Cowtown Half Marathon in February of 2023. Both were well-run events with a lot of support and encouragement along the routes.

5. *Why did you choose the Oklahoma City Marathon for your first marathon? How did you train for this first marathon? What part of your training do you think was most helpful in getting ready for Ok City? Was there any aspect of your training that, in retrospect, you might change?*



It was at the Cowtown Expo that I learned about the OKC Marathon. There was a booth there promoting the race. It appealed to me because of what the race helps support and it was a decent driving distance from Lubbock. I had read a couple of books on running/training for marathons. They included training plans and had a lot of good information in them. I had learned that Debbie Gelber was coaching some other runners for their first marathon. I decided to ask her if she would help

me. I wanted to be able to ask questions and have face to face conversations with a coach. I knew Debbie was a very experienced runner. Thankfully she agreed and I'm so glad that I didn't try it on my own. I learned a lot from Debbie. The long-runs were where I really learned the most. You learn what works and what doesn't -- what to wear and what not to wear -- what to fuel with and what not to use. All the things you need to know but don't know until you actually test them. I enjoyed doing different types of running workouts during the week on my short runs. The stride runs are my favorite. When I finished the OKC Marathon I felt so much better physically than I did after the San Antonio and Cowtown races. I attribute that to the training. It really made a big difference.





5. *Tell us about your marathon! How did it go? What were the best parts of it and what were the most challenging aspects? What was the day like and how did you feel before, during and after your 26.2 miles?*

The race was awesome.. Lots of support along the entire route. There was so much to watch and take-in. That helps keep your mind busy in a good way. Mile 22 ended up being



the most challenging -- mostly mentally. I was ready to be finished. I didn't hurt or ache. I was just ready to be done. One of the best aspects of the race was being there with Gary and friends that were also running. Friends that I had trained with over the previous 4 months. Gary's niece and great-niece were also there running so we were able to connect with them at the event too. The weather was on every TV we passed all weekend -- warnings of severe weather. We made another trip to the EXPO on Saturday and were able to purchase rain ponchos at the last minute. The evening before the race we weren't sure what kind of weather we would wake up to the next morning. There were a lot of storms and even tornados around the area. I woke up several times during the night because of the storms. I remember waking up and praying "Jesus, just bring it on thru...let it get here and get on out." The next morning while walking to the start line it started lightly raining. Before we started, it had stopped raining. It rained lightly at some point during the race but it felt good -- not heavy and pelting thankfully. An overcast sky is perfect running weather to me. I'm not sure what I might have done, if I had to run all the miles in soaking wet socks and shoes. There was a feeling of electric anticipation in the starting corrals. Lots of energy and excitement. I kept reminding myself to go slow....don't get swept up in all the energy and go out too fast. That was a very prevalent thought and very hard. I was so afraid that I would fizzle out before I ever got to the finish line. I received text messages from my coach, family and friends during the race. That was a big encouragement. About a mile and a half from the finish line I made a left turn and looked up and saw Gary standing there at the corner. I was so happy to see him! That gave me the push I needed. When I was approaching the finish line I heard familiar voices calling out my name. I looked to my left and there were my running partners and friends sitting in the stands cheering for me and encouraging me across the line. Crossing the finish line was overwhelmingly emotional. I did not get to that finish line alone. So many others helped me get there in so many different ways.

6. *What advice do you have for others who would like to prepare for a first marathon?*

DO IT! Just start. Ask questions, talk to others that have done it. Seek advice and show up for yourself. I went from being someone with absolutely no interest in ever doing a full marathon to being "a marathon runner". That amazes me. A month later I can hardly believe that I did that. The people we surround ourselves with matters. That is true for all areas of our lives. I'm so glad I tried, and even more amazed that I finished. Will I do another? I sure hope so. The feeling afterward is amazing!

Tommié



The Race Is The Thing

by WTRC Member Les Kinman

"It's ironic how the one thing that brought me joy, also brought me so much pain." – Chris Farley

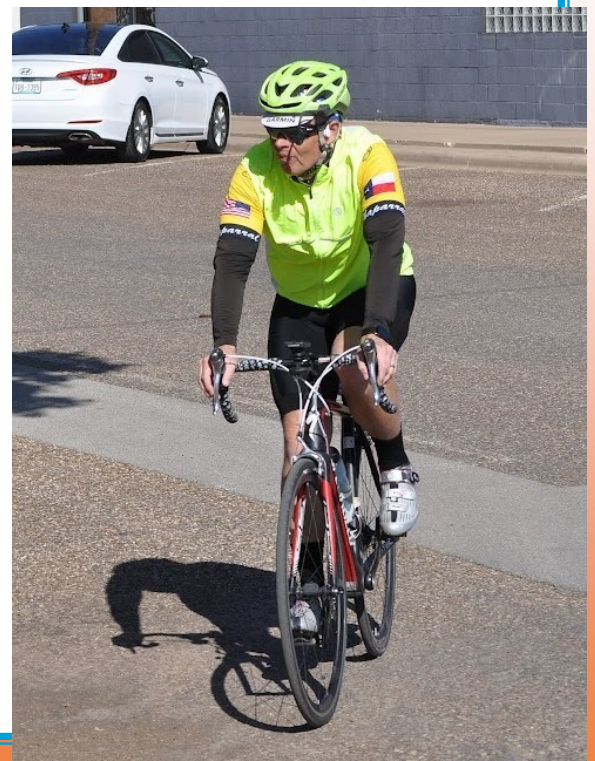
The race is the thing. It's the real story of why we run. We run to train, and we train to race. For the talented few, mostly the young, the race is the honing and refining of the razor's edge that is winning and losing. The shaving of seconds, the deft navigation of tangents along chicanes, and the precisely measured cadence paired with a perfected stride are the ingredients that yield absolute maximum performance. And yet, that most perfected form is laid low by heat, humidity, wind, and undulations...variables beyond our control. So, in the end, the race is the great equalizer.

The race indeed always wins. But there is hope in the race, for not all are striving for medals and podium places. Most, almost all, are competing against a less-easily defeated foe – ourselves. It starts with the training. The training will expose the weakest and showcase the strongest pieces of our character. If we can overcome the self-protective instincts that tell us when we are in danger or in pain or that we're well-overextended, at least by the estimation of the smaller parts of our brain, we might persevere.

There is scant reward in the training. In the beginning, the miles are our trophies; however, in short order, the miles begin to all look the same unless traversed a bit more quickly than last time. After all, it's the speed we crave. We forget the minutes and become mindful of the seconds. However, we quickly learn the relativity of speed. It's a sobering thought to realize that somewhere among the 8 billion inhabitants of the world, there is a single person who can lay claim to fastest, knowing there is none faster. The rest of us don't have to look far to find someone faster than us. Life often adds salt to that wound when we learn that those faster than us are often older as well.

But we carry on. There is innate human value in getting off the couch when we don't want to and when others might not. That fight alone is sometimes enough, but when it's cold or hot, bright or dark, or we're tired or unmotivated, that's when the race begins to indwell us. We will do the hard work, the boring work, so that when we set out to do the joyful work, we will survive *and* thrive. If we can get that, we are in the race already.

Race goals are often futile, but necessary. Our first racing goals are always the same...to finish. We might even load up multiple goals, "A," "B," and even "C" goals, because we need to know that, no matter how many ways we fail, we will at least succeed in some way, and thus, the race is justified. We are reminded by the posters and memes, after all, that we actually did pay for this privilege of suffering, but that's reasonable as the value is in the suffering. The human spirit requires only a single goal be met in any endeavor, though, and that is simply a willingness to repeat the feat, if perhaps faster or longer or both. That's how the race gets us.



We can do better. We will probably not find our actual limits, although our small brains will convince us early on that we have. Where are our limits? The human spirit needs to at least sniff at those boundaries to remain hungry, and a hungry spirit is the key to most worthwhile achievement. The race, if it doesn't defeat us, will keep us hungry.

It's the humanity that gives the race its life. The ebbing and flowing of people, some fast, some slow, all relative, is the pulsing lifeblood of the race. When we remove our earbuds in the late stages, we can take in the palpable suffering and visceral anguish of fellow humans testing their limits while bearing their various burdens, obvious and not. If we race enough, we will feel both crowded and lonely, selfish and grateful, angry and joyful, shamed and proud, ugly and beautiful, all in the course of one event.

There's a reason the race attracts so many memorials, charities, and reminders of human frailties. We suffer, and it reminds us of suffering. We have little else to do in the race other than think and observe. Such time lends itself to reflection and even prayer, sometimes for ourselves but more often for others. The race is meditative that way. We are so grateful to be able to end our brief, self-imposed pain after a few hours with smiles and celebrations. We are reminded at races of those whose pain knows no finish line.

If, at the end of it all, we are able to persevere...to achieve one or more of our alphabet goals, the race rewards us with unmatched joy. Oh, there is more physical pain to come, but that can wait, for the real joy of life in that moment is in the medal, the space blanket, the snacks, and the proclamation to all those that will listen in the coming days that we finished the race! And, in those hours and days following the nervousness, the suffering and the overcoming, there is a seed planted that will soon take root. There *will* be other races, and we *will* be faster and go farther. We *will*.

Someday, in a future not as far away as we might imagine, we will crest a hill of sorts. We will run our last PR. We will finish our last marathon, even run our last race. And, the insidious truth is that when that happens, we will not realize it until it's too late. There will be a finish line for all of us that serves as a retirement party of sorts, although in hindsight.

The lessons of the race are clear – we *should* train to find and test our limits and push them as far out as we can, because that's what humans do; we *ought to* race against worthy competitors, but mainly against ourselves and our demons with a goal to defeat them and then challenge them yet again; when we race, we *should* consider the plight of the people around us and decide how we might make others' lives better; and ultimately, we *ought to* run each race as if it were our last, never knowing what the fates hold on the other side of the tape. For after all, we will know then that the race was the thing. It was the real story of why we ran.

Les Kinman has been a runner and a member of the West Texas Running Club since 2010. He began running as a mechanism to lose weight but soon fell in love with the human psychology of running and other forms of human physical achievement. He has since completed 19 marathons, a 50K, and innumerable half-marathons, 10Ks, and 5Ks. He sustained a degenerative knee injury a year ago, and has had to focus on cycling in order to continue testing his limits. Les is determined to run again.

Deb's Five Favorite Marathon Courses

another installment of

"Deb's Five Faves" by Debbie Gelber

For more about these races and other go to Debbie's blog: <https://debrunsto50.wordpress.com/>

Well, I should have thought twice before I decided to write about this topic! Wow, this was indeed a difficult one. With 49 marathons under my belt, I have a variety of courses to choose from. Some are obvious: Boston, Athens, Berlin, New York... but I decided to leave those out and concentrate on some others that people might not think of right away. My criteria are strictly the marathon course, scenery, difficulty, repeatability.... So, without further delay, here are my favorites:

[Big Sur International Marathon](#) – Most beautiful course.

I have run Big Sur twice as part of the Boston to Big Sur Challenge and I can hands down say that this is one of the most beautiful marathons I have run. It is not an easy course at all, (2-mile hill at mile 13) but the scenery is spectacular. Runners get to run along the Pacific Coast on Highway 1, get to see and



View from the Bixby Bridge

cross the famous Bixby Bridge where a pianist in a tux is playing, and end up in the quaint town of Carmel. Unfortunately, entry is through a lottery system, tour operator or charity.

[Revel Big Cottonwood Marathon](#) – Second most beautiful course and second fastest course I have run.

All the Revel races are beautiful and someday I would like to run them all, but Big Cottonwood in Salt Lake City, Utah is not far behind Big Sur in breathtaking vistas. I have run this race twice as well and it is not only beautiful, but it is a fast course. That is, if you like downhill courses. Make no mistake, downhill courses are hard in their own way. You can trash your quads and blow up your race if you don't strategize. And you must deal with the elevation in the beginning. The views in the Wasatch Mountain range are amazing and the course has changed and taken out the awful out-and-back at mile 18.



[Marine Corps Marathon](#) – Most meaningful course and loaded with historical markers.

If anyone would ask me what marathon every runner should run in his/her lifetime, I would answer the Marine Corps Marathon. Growing up on the East Coast, my family made several vacation trips to Washington D.C. We went to the Smithsonian, toured the White House, climbed the stairs to the top of the Washington Monument, etc., but I wasn't a runner back then. When I ran my 5th marathon at the Marine Corps marathon, I saw D.C. through a runner's eyes. Yes, it has hills and is somewhat challenging, but there are a few things that are just so meaningful about this course. The first is the blue mile. Just before the halfway point (at mile 12), there are pictures of fallen soldiers all along both sides of the road. Their families are standing with American flags, and everyone is silent. It is so moving! The second is the finish. Of course there is a steep hill up to the finish line, but marines are all along that hill cheering runners up to the finish at the Iwo Jima monument. And when you cross that line, a uniformed marine salutes you and puts a medal around your neck. It is an amazing experience!



[Revel Mt. Charleston Marathon](#) – Fastest and most memorable course for me.

Back in 2016, I was on a quest to run a Boston Qualifying time. I missed it by 30 seconds at Napa Valley Marathon (also one I would recommend) and wanted to redeem myself a month later at an inaugural race in Las Vegas; Revel Mt. Charleston Marathon. This was my first Revel Race, and I was so impressed with the organization, the swag, the course, and everything about the race. Like Big Cottonwood, it starts at elevation and drops down around 5000 feet, but at a much more gradual grade. I was able to BQ with a 12-minute buffer on this course and it is still my PR today.



[Chicago Marathon](#) (I know this is a major, but it is my favorite major!) – Fastest/flattest major, great crowd support, easiest logistics.

Chicago Marathon is a great race. Period. With over 1.7 million spectators and a very flat course, it is my favorite major marathon so far (I have run 4 out of the 6). The course starts in Grant Park, so it is not a point to point (no buses). You can literally walk 5 minutes to the start line if you stay in one of the downtown hotels. Runners get to run through 29 different neighborhoods while listening to a lot of great entertainment. Even though there are 50,000 runners,

it is not a congested race. Corral times are strictly enforced and streets are wide. Qualifying times are not as hard as NYC or Boston and it is one of the easiest lotteries to gain entry. And the pizza choices afterwards are incredible!

I realized while writing this that I have run each of these races multiple times. That's a sure sign that I liked them! Thanks for reading about my favorites! Next time, Deb's Favorite Five Race Medals!

Hugh Haynes Memorial Horseshoe Bend Run

Race Report — May 2024

Another rainy Horseshoe Bend Run event — such a blessing to have rain! It was generally a nice day for all three distances. Nathan, Cathy and Eli Paden did a great job organizing volunteers and getting three races off to their respective starts. This race has the most water-stops of all of WTRC's races because the 11-mile option is a full loop while the 6-mile and 2-mile runs are out-and-backs. So — more-than-usual volunteers were needed and received and much appreciated!

There were 225 finishers for all races today — a big jump from last year's 171 and the prior year's 134 finishers! There were 97 in the 2 mile, 67 in the 6 mile and 61 for the 11 mile run. Way to go all runners!!

For the 2-mile run, **Kate Hesse** led all female runners to the finish in 13:24 — **Jorden Andersen** led and won the race with a time of 10:59 — both great times! For the 6-mile race **Dax Mahan** led all runners with a time of 37:44 and **Gabrielle Arsiaga** led all female runners with a finish of 39:15 — great runs you two! In the 11-mile run, **David Mora III** blew in with a fast 1:03:41 (a 5:47 minute pace for this

distance...wow!) and **Kayla Rathmann** finished ahead of all female runners with an impressive time of 1:31:16 — way to go, both of you!

Thank you volunteers! They were: Nathan, Cathy and Eli Paden (race directors), David Higgins, Suzan Caudle, Gabby Saldana, Jason, Jeremy and Bryce Pena, Rebecca Puckett, Teesaha Low, Rudy Soto, Sophia Peralta, Les Kinman, and Steve German.

Great work with the race all!

Horseshoe Bend is a great place for one of the WTRC monthly races. We all really appreciate the Paden family for setting up the race course, organizing the volunteers and distributing awards among many other tasks.

Thank you all for participating in this year's Hugh Haynes Memorial Horseshoe Bend Run!



Nathan, Cathy & Eli — great work directing the race!



Tough but scenic Slaton race to honor doctor

BY JOSIE MUSICO

A-J MEDIA

SLATON — It's a tough 11 miles, but Dr. Hugh Haynes was never one to miss a challenge.

The West Texas Running Club's annual race in the late physician's honor is set for Saturday morning at his favorite running turf.

"It's a fun race. It's one of the most scenic races we have," said race director Randy Holloway.

Hugh Haynes Memorial Race runners select from three courses — 2 miles, 6 miles and 11 miles. All three are held in Horseshoe Bend Canyon, north of Slaton at county roads 3600 and 7300.



Haynes

longtime friend James Livermore.

"He loved that canyon," Livermore said.

Haynes died March 5, 2008, in a biking accident in the canyon. He was 76 and left four children.

Haynes became a medical doctor after he was ordained as a Methodist minister and served two years in the Army. Before his still-unexplained bicycle crash, Haynes delivered

The race's namesake ran and bicycled the area up to three times a day after he retired as an obstetrician, recalls his

Haynes Memorial Race

- **What:** West Texas Running Club's Hugh Haynes Memorial Race
- **When:** Saturday
- **Where:** Horseshoe Bend Canyon, north of Slaton
- **Courses:** 11 miles, 6 miles, 2 miles
- **More information:** wtrunning.com or (806) 789-1547

more than 3,500 babies, Livermore said.

Haynes completed more than 50 marathons and some ultra-marathons, but he didn't pick up the sport until middle age, Livermore said. He remembers his friend enjoyed the exercise and being outdoors, but particularly liked run-

ning for the calories it earned him.

"We always kidded him — and he kind of agreed — his main motivation for running was so he could eat all the Blue Bell ice cream he wanted," Livermore said.

Haynes volunteered with West Texas Running Club events by marking miles and setting up aid stations, and directed a few races. He could be a bit eccentric, but was well respected as a doctor, athlete and friend, Livermore said.

"He was a really nice guy," he said.

In Saturday's races, the 2- and 6-mile courses will turn around at the halfway points and the 11-mile forms a loop. The 2-mile race is on

flat ground, while its two companion races have some elevation gain with climbs out of the canyon.

"The 11-mile is difficult, but it's very pretty," Holloway, the director, said.

The West Texas Running Club welcomes runners of all ages and skill levels. The 13 events it holds each year can be considered fun runs or races, depending on participants' ambition.

"You don't have to be competitive, but we've got people who like to race," Holloway said.

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 Follow Josie on Twitter @josiemusico



New Age-Group Records - 2024 Hugh Haynes Memorial Horseshoe Bend 11 MILE (1985)

| | | | | | |
|-------|----------------------|------------|----|---------|----------|
| 16-19 | David Mora III | Lubbock | 19 | 1:03:42 | 2024 new |
| | OLD: Brian Brashears | Lubbock | 18 | 1:08:15 | 1989 |
| 16-19 | Bailey Springer | Lubbock Tx | 18 | 1:32:47 | 2024 new |
| | OLD: Bailey Springer | Lubbock Tx | 17 | 1:34:00 | 2023 |

6 MILE (1989)

| | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|-----------|----|---------|------------------|
| 25-29 | Gabrielle Arsiaga | Hobbs NM | 27 | 39:15* | 2024new/Tie OA-F |
| | OLD: Laurel Zarnoth | Lubbock | 29 | 42:30 | 2023 |
| 45-49 | Lory Ioppolo | Lubbock | 48 | 46:51 | 2024 new |
| | OLD: Aimee Blair | Wolfforth | 45 | 47:07 | 2018 |
| 55-59 | Debbie Gelber | Lubbock | 55 | 49:52 | 2024 new |
| | OLD: Margaret Woodfin | Lubbock | 59 | 54:15 | 2023 |
| 75+ | PJ Sullivan | Lubbock | 79 | 1:04:42 | 2024 new |

2 MILE

| | | | | | |
|-------|--------------------|---------|----|-------|----------|
| 07-09 | Logan Estrada | Lubbock | 9 | 13:26 | 2024 new |
| | OLD: Logan Estrada | Lubbock | 8 | 14:08 | 2023 |
| 55-59 | John Corelis | Lubbock | 58 | 12:51 | 2024 new |
| | OLD: Jim Harris | Hobbs | 57 | 13:24 | 2000 |



My First Marathon

by WTRC Member Rudy Soto

Growing up in Meadow, Texas, I was into every sport a small 1A (now Six-man) school had to offer. I played football, basketball, and even tennis for my senior year. The only years I participated in track and field were the years that the coaches made it mandatory if you wanted to play football the next year. I remember running hurdles one year and throwing the shot put and discus. My favorite sport was baseball, but it was not offered in our high school. I got the majority of my cardio from dancing on the weekends. My parents would take me to a family-friendly dance hall Friday through Sunday. That was our passion and what made up our social life.



Fast forward to 2024 and my passion and social life revolve around running. The Lubbock running community is jam-packed with people who mentor, encourage, support, cheer for and run right alongside with you. My biggest cheerleaders these days are my wife, Gale, my daughter Jenny, my son Matt and his wife Shawnee. Part of the reason I run is to see the smiles on their faces when I cross a finish line or retell the experience of my latest race or training run.

I spent over 10 years in the U.S. Army, where of course, we did quite a bit of running. Forced running is not anywhere near as enjoyable as voluntary running. After separating from the Army, like many others do, I let myself go and quit doing any kind of strenuous exercise. In 2013, I looked in the mirror one morning and decided changes had to be made. While doing research, I ran into the *Couch 2 5K* app. I decided to use that to get me started. In the Fall of that same year, I entered the

Panhandle 5K. I finished 2nd in my age group and I was hooked. In the beginning, I was not very consistent. I remember repeating the *Couch 2 5K* two other times to get back to where I could finish a 5K. Once was due to injury and once due to laziness.

I kept signing up for 5K races that I could find locally. Like other runner's stories, I got brave and decided to try a 10K race. As soon as I finished that race, my running mentor at the time, Angie Sonnenberg, asked me when I would be running my first half marathon. I laughed because at the time, I felt that it was impossible. As of today, I've completed 11 half marathons. Currently, my favorite half marathon is Cowtown in Ft. Worth. The environment, the support, the route, the medals, t-shirts, people, are all high quality and something to look forward to every year. If you're looking for a half marathon to run, I would highly recommend Cowtown on the last Sunday in February.

As much as I enjoy Cowtown, it is not my favorite race that I've run so far. I ran a 5-mile race and a 10-mile race in Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs. The hills made it a definite challenge, but the scenery more than makes up for it. A close second would be the Brownsville Police Department Half Marathon in December of 2023. I ran a near PR and enjoyed everything about the race. It was a little short, but of course I kept running until my watch showed 13.1.

From the editor: Am not sure exactly when I met Rudy but at some of the WTRC races I noticed that this person was run-walking his races. That always intrigues me because many, maybe most, runners run under the assumption that to be a runner you have to actually run all of the race! So, to see someone employing the run-walk was encouraging to me because as races went along I could tell Rudy's average pace for a race was improving. So, I met Rudy — really nice guy — and we visit for short periods of time at the WTRC races I had also seen Rudy at the half-marathons around the Lubbock area. It was clear he was "into running"! I heard from Rudy as well as from his coach — Riannon Rowley — that he was training for the Denver Colfax Marathon (see this site: <https://www.runcolfax.org/>) Well, that intrigued me because not only was this to be his first marathon, I was pretty sure, being in Denver, Colorado — altitude, hills — it would be more challenging than some of the relatively local marathons. So I asked, and Rudy graciously agreed, if he would give us insight into his first marathon experience.

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All of the races that I had run and some encouraging running friends, led to the desire to train for a marathon. I asked my friend, Riannon Rowley, if she would help me train for a marathon and possibly run the same marathon. She agreed and we chose Colfax 2024 in Denver, Colorado for our race. We officially started training on January 1st. She had me mixing in endurance, hills, tempo runs, speed workouts, and she asked me to do strength training. Unfortunately, I was not very cooperative with the strength training. In hindsight, that probably hurt my performance on race day. The part of training that most made me capable of finishing a marathon was consistency. That's not to say that I hit every training session perfectly, but I was consistent enough to build up to 26.2 miles. There was one point in my training that was almost very costly. I ran up and over a hill of hardpacked dirt and ended up faceplanting really hard. My forehead was bleeding, and I was scared that I would have to stop training. Fortunately, I took 3 days to recover and was able to continue on my journey.

After training for four and a half months, it was finally marathon time. Race day started very early with a 4:00 AM wakeup call. When we arrived at the Start line, it was rather chilly. I was worried that I had not dressed properly.



That thought didn't last beyond the first half mile. My plan was to run the first 4 miles, then run/walk the rest of the way. I felt pretty good, so I decided to run until mile 6. I'm not sure if that cost me. I decided it might be better to stick to a race plan next time. It became really warm, really quickly, and there were not enough water stops along the route to make up for it. I was happy with my time up to the half marathon distance. That also

didn't last long. I felt the leg cramps creeping up. By mile 19, my legs were cramping so bad that I was no longer able to run. I accepted the fact that I was going to have to walk 7 miles at a 16-minute pace in order to finish before the 6-hour cutoff. I actually finished in 6 hours and 5 minutes.

Here is my biggest takeaway from my race experience: my physical strength may need a lot of improvement. However, I will never question my mental strength again. Mental strength got me across the finish line on this particular Sunday morning. The route was interesting. We were able to run inside of Mile High Stadium, where the Denver Broncos play their home games. Running through downtown Denver was somewhat scenic. The view of the mountains during the route made it really nice. We also ran through an active fire station. I was also a witness to a foot chase, as a police officer was chasing a young man through a city park. I'm not sure what he did, but it made for interesting entertainment for me and the runners around me.

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The emotions that came with running my first marathon were not what I expected. I expected to be smiling the whole route because of what I was accomplishing and then being very emotional as I crossed the finish line. The emotions that I did have were nowhere close. I felt like I had let myself down, as well as everyone that supported me on this journey. I know that's not true, but that didn't stop me from feeling that way. Because of the pain in my legs, I did not experience the emotions that I expected at the finish line. My friends and family were there, and I was very happy to see them. The positive emotions did come a few days later. Riannon and I were on a recovery walk and going through an After-Action Review of the race and training period. After reflecting on the entire journey, I realized how proud I am of what I had just completed. When I consider that I ran over 550 miles from January 1st through the end of the marathon, I started to feel accomplished. It's another one of those awards or medals that no one will ever be able to take away from me. However, even with that sense of completion, I remember thinking after the race, despite the pain, that this would not be my last marathon. I know that I can do better. So, there will be at least one more marathon for me.

If you are thinking about running your first marathon, I would say "Go for it!!!" Be smart about it. Make sure you are properly trained. Seek advice from experienced runners as far as which marathon to attempt. Find a training plan and stick to it. Be prepared to spend hours and hours training for your race. There were many mornings that I was waking up at 4:00 AM just to get in the planned miles. There are two things that I will be better at when

training for my next marathon. I will add more strength training and I will research and implement better fueling strategies. If you are reading this, I know that you don't have to look far in order to find experienced runners that will help you reach your goals. I give much credit to the mentors that I've already mentioned, plus USAFit-Lubbock, Stride Lubbock, and RUN LBK. I can now call myself a marathoner and I have all of them to thank for it!

Rudy



Bobby Birdsong Memorial Mosaic Run

June 2024 Race Report by
Lydia Turner and Reeda York

For a late Spring day in West Texas it was a beautiful day for WTRC's 2nd Bobby Birdsong Memorial Mosaics Run in the great town of Levelland, Texas! It did get a bit warm but, hey, it's that time of year :-)). WTRC's own **Lydia Turner and Reeda York** did another fantastic job planning and organizing today's race. The 10K race began at 7:30, the 2-mile race just a few minutes later. At 9:00 a fun group of kids took off for the 1-mile Fun Run. The Levelland Town Square is a great place to start and end a race!

We are thankful for all the Levellanders who volunteered to help with the race! They are:

From the **Levelland Police Department**: Capt. Mateo Lopez, Ofc. Benoit, Det. Lopez, Sgt. Haralson, Sgt. Rocia Gameros, Det. Raul Lopez, Ofc. Omar Diaz

The Color Guard: Ofc. Benjamin Martinez, Ofc. Dakota Moody, Ofc. Ernest Hernandez, and the DPS Flag - Trooper Melissa Flanigan.

A big thanks goes to **Levelland Mainstreet Manager** Tania Moody who is the Texas Downtown Executive Director!

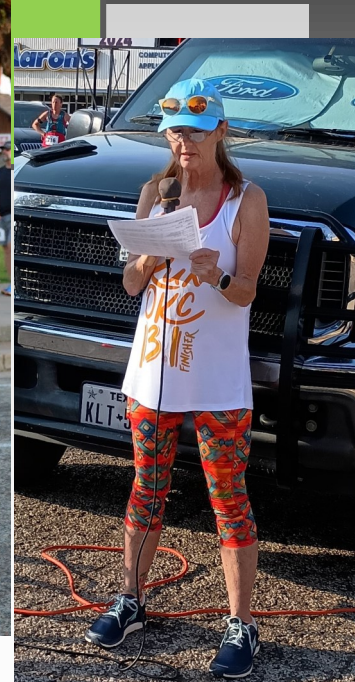
From **South Plains College** there was Robert Perkins - Hall Director, Arnulfo Cera - Hall Director, and the SPC - Campus Security — Joe Robinson along with 8 other SPC volunteers.

Other Levelland volunteers

were Lori Ware, Nicole Phillips, Ashley Bautista, Devanee & Maddie Almagar, Cynthia Sanchez and her children, Preston Turner, Jim Ellison, R.H. and Cindy Reaves, Rob Martin and Children, the Levelland Street Department, Stuart Moody, Rusty & Schahara Hudelston, Aleisha English & Children and Andrew Badke.

Thank you to those who waved flags bringing attention to the beautiful mosaics that can be seen throughout Levelland.

Thank you, Levelland!!



All the way from Abilene to help was Lori Wilhite. Thank you, Lori!

WTRC members who volunteered were Suzan Caudle, David Higgins, Sylvia & Cliff Miller, Adam & Rebecca Puckett, Taitum & Matt McCallister, Anthony Badke, Derrek Eldredge, Steve German, Ron Lubowicz and Justin & Jolina Beaver. Thank you WTRC members!!

There were **108 runners** in the 10K, **96** in the 2-mile and **17** 1-milers for a **total of 221 runners** — significantly eclipsing last year's inaugural race participation numbering 178. The more runners the better the race atmosphere!!

Running these distances is always a impressive effort. Leading the way in the 10K was **Brandon**

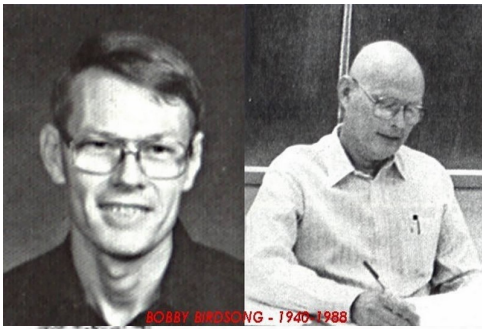
Birdsong flying in at 32:52 — a 5:17 average pace! Leading all female runners was **Taylor Limbaugh** with a fast finish of 41:14. Really great runs the both of you!

Leading the 2-mile race was **Caleb Johnson** with a time of 12:10 and **Mary Carpenter** led all female runners with a time of 13:44. Way to go, Caleb and Mary!

Lorenzo Cordova led all 1-milers with a finish of 7:04 — great run, Lorenzo!

All-in-all it was a great race venue and a great set of races — Lydia and Reeda and those who helped them did an outstanding job making this a memorable and fun event.





BOBBY BIRDSONG - 1940-1988

A TRIBUTE

By Joe Post

Bobby Birdsong Remembered

The passing of Bobby Birdsong on May 24 was a great loss to all of us who had the privilege of knowing this good man. The greater loss by far is to those new members who did not have that chance.

Bobby founded the Levelland Lope in 1980 and was Director for eight years. Not satisfied to just present a good race, typically Bobby went the extra mile and got local sponsors to fund Lope T shirts and equipment bags for his runners. Even when sponsorship funds were no longer available, he was trying to give the Lope a little something extra by working on a means to computerize the results and give the runners a personal copy. This spirit of extra effort was also evident in his work as a biology teacher at the Levelland High School, where the students recognized his impact on them by selecting him as Teacher of the Year for 1989.

I first met Bobby in 1982 when I called him for information about the Lope, the first race I was ever to enter. It was largely his friendliness and encouragement that convinced me to try it. After the race when I stopped to thank him, he even remembered my call and took the time to congratulate me and urged me to keep coming out to the WTRC runs. Since I was a novice runner, this really meant a lot to me. I haven't missed a Lope since, and it was Bobby's positive attitude and encouragement that made me want to join the WTRC.

As I got to know Bobby by helping out at the Lope and by spending a few minutes with him at the other races, it did not take too long to gain great respect for him as a man with perspective. He would compete hard during a race, but the result never seemed as important to him as the good effort. He thrived on courses which featured tough weather and/or terrain conditions. Quoted in the Amarillo Globe-News after the 1984 Palo Duro Canyon Run in January, Bobby said, "There are fair-weather runners and then there are runners." To me, this seems to sum up Bobby's approach not only toward his running but also toward his personal commitments and life in general. He chose not to do things because they were easy, but because they were important. The runs won't ever be as good again without Bobby to visit with.

So I guess that as long as there's a June and a Levelland Lope and I've got 6.2 miles left in my legs, I'll make the trip over because it will be the best way to remember Bobby, standing there on those steps, making jokes as he hands out the awards. And I won't ever pull on a Levelland Lope T shirt or pack a Levelland Lope equipment bag without being reminded that I ought to be a better person.

We would all be fortunate to leave such a legacy.

The June West Texas Running Club
race will henceforth be known as

The Bobby Birdsong Memorial Levelland Lope

From the editor: Joe Post — long time WTRC member, WTRC Board member and runner who recently passed away — wrote this about Bobby Birdsong for whom the WTRC Bobby Birdsong Memorial Run is named.



West Texas Running Club



@WTRunning



Come Run With Us!

WTRC races are found at wtrunning.com



Was great to see Mark Woodfin today as he recovers from a serious health issue—way to go, Mark!!!

WTRC Members —

We have 7 more races left:

Firecracker Run, HOT Dam, Shallowater Stampede, Red Raider Road Race, Buffalo Wallow, Turkey Trot, and Toys for Tots Cross Country Run.

So... plenty of time to earn more points toward the series standings!

Be sure to plan ahead which race you will volunteer for so you will be a part of the Challenge Series.

For the [rules of the Series](#) and for the [current Challenge Series Standings](#) go to:

<https://wtrunning.com/challenge-series-standings-info/>

Bottom line — run as many races as possible (3 qualifies but more is more fun!) and volunteer for at least one race (when you volunteer you are not running that particular race). For our club to work we need help during each of the 13 races — the “jobs” are not difficult and you will get to see the race from a whole new perspective! It’s fun to see the “guts” of the race :-)