

2024 July/August

# WTRC Newsletter



July 4th  
Firecracker  
Kids run

## *In this issue:*

- WTRC Firecracker Run Race Report
- The W.T.R.C. — The Wherefore and the Why  
*by Joe Post*
- Be Where I Am Not Expected To Be  
*by WTRC member George Stern*
- Deb's Five Favorite Race Medals  
*by WTRC President Pro-tempore Debbie Gelber*
- Getting To Know Fellow WTRC Members  
*by 5 current WTRC members*
- HOT Dam Run Race Report
- Five More Races Left!



**WEST TEXAS  
RUNNING CLUB**

LUBBOCK, TEXAS

# 2024 WTRC Board

**President:** *Jonathan Botros*

**President Pro-tempore:** *Debbie Gelber*  
**Social Media Presence and Challenge Series Awards Director**

**Vice President/Operations/Media:**  
*Emmanuel Ramirez*

**Secretary:** *Wendy Johnston*

**Treasurer/Webmaster/Registration:**  
*David Higgins*

**Customer Service Director:** *Suzan Caudle*

**RRCA Representative/Course Marking:**  
*Dean Threadgill*

**Challenge Series:** *Rebecca Puckett*

**Outreach:** *Ron Lubowicz*

**Trailer & Equipment:** *Tommy Johnson*

**Newsletter/Hydration:** *Steve German*  
*stevegerman5@gmail.com*

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



**Race Director:** *Dean Threadgill*

## Shallowater Stampede

**2nd Saturday in September**

8:00AM Start 10K | 2Mi

Bib pickup on Race Day – 6:45 to 7:30

USATF Certified #TX07090ETM(10K)

USATF Certified #TX07091ETM(2Mi)

**RACE**

**LOCATION:**  
Shallowater High School

FM1294,  
Shallowater



## 43rd Annual

## Red Raider Road Race

**Saturday, Oct. 12th**

8:00 am Start 10K | 5K

USATF Certified #TX13187ETM (10K) USATF Certified #TX13188ETM (5K)

**RACE LOCATION:** Texas Tech University  
Robert H. Ewalt Student Rec Center



**Race Directors:**  
**Jonathan Botros & Manny Ramirez**

# RED RAIDER ROAD RACE

# WTRC Firecracker Run

## July 4th, 2024 Race Report

This year's 55th annual Firecracker Run was another fun and extra-well attended WTRC event! This year 26 kids ran the 1-mile, 126 ran the 3-mile and 99 toughed out the 10K — a total of 251 participants. In the past 10 years this attendance was eclipsed only once. The Lubbock area running community continues to grow.



Great job directing, Gabby!

The weather was about as good as it could be for a West Texas July with cloudy skies (we runners love the clouds!) and 75 degrees at the start of the race.

David Higgins provided ice cool towels at the 10k turnaround and finish line, this was a great idea and greatly appreciated by the runners.

PJ Sullivan created a t-shirt design that paid homage to the two men that started the first Firecracker Run — Gene Adams and James Morris.



The overall 3-mile winner was **Jaime Gonzalez** with a time of 17:21. Leading all 3-mile female runners was **Laura Pennington** coming in at 19:15.

The overall 10K winner was **David Mora III** with a time of 33:54 — a 5:27 min/mi pace! **Reese Pena** once again paced the female 10K runners with a time of 38:12 — a

fabulous 6:08 pace (*all the best, Reese, for your upcoming Lubbock High Cross Country season!!*).



Thanks to the many volunteers that assisted with the race, what a **blazing, sparkling, dynamite** group of people :-)) Races do not run without you. Volunteers for today's race were Gabby

Saldana (Race Director), Suzan Caudle, David Higgins, Lance Ward, Emmanuel Ramirez, Lydia Turner, Laura Murphy, Kim Hovland, Stacy and Scott Cain, Bill Felton, Ron Lubowicz, PJ Sullivan, Ed

and Leesa Price, Marti Greer and Donald Hilger. Thank you volunteers — great work!

All-in-all it was a good day — thanks to all who ran, volunteered, cheered and just came to see what the race is all about! See you at next month's Shallowater Stampede!



TEXAS' OLDEST CONTINUOUS ROAD RACE (3Mi Since 1970)

WTRC's ANNUAL FIRECRACKER RUNS, Brownfield TX

JULY 4th

New Age-Group RECORDS (after 55 years)

10K (since 2018)

MEN

DIV	NAME	TOWN	AGE	TIME	YEAR
13-15	Arturo Rodriguez	Lubbock	15	38:05	2024 new
Old:	Billy Bond	Lubbock	15	38:59	2023
20-24	Xavier Sanchez	Lubbock	20	34:10	2024 new
Old:	Bryce Boggs TTU	Lubbock	20	34:48	2021
45-49	Quent Bearden	Lubbock	49	38:14	2024 new
Old:	Quent Bearden	Lubbock	48	39:05	2023
Clydes	Jake Reid	Idalou	32	48:44	2024 new

WOMEN

16-19	Reese Pena	Lubbock	17	38:12	2024 new
Old:	Reese Pena	Lubbock	16	39:06 *	2023
35-39	Aleisha English	Lubbock	35	49:56	2024 new
Old:	Cheri Gerwig	Lubbock	39	50:09	2019

3 MILE (Since 1970)

MEN (no new age-group records)

WOMEN

35-39	Laura Pennington	Lubbock	36	19:15	2024 new
Old:	Lory Ioppolo	Lubbock	37	20:04	2014
50-54	Michaela Jansen	Lubbock	51	23:33	2024 new
Old:	P.J. Mitchell	Lubbock	53	23:55	1999
55-59	Debbie Gelber	Lubbock	55	24:35	2024 new
Old:	Dahlia Hood	Lubbock	58	26:25	2017
60-64	Margaret Woodfin	Lubbock	60	27:08	2024 new
Old:	Estela Galvan	Brownfield	60	28:52	2003
65-69	Rosa Sales	Brownfield	65	31:17	2024 new
Old:	Lydia Turner	Levelland	67	42:29	2021
75+	Sheila West	Lubbock	81	45:31	2024 new
Old:	Sheila West	Lubbock	80	47:50	2023

\* Overall event record



## The W.T.R.C. - The Wherefore and the Why

As the date for the 20th Annual Firecracker Runs, Texas' Oldest Continuous Road Race, quickly approaches, it seems a fitting time to reflect on the pride we can all take in being part of the continuing tradition of the West Texas Running Club.

There are few organizations of any type that have continued to serve their memberships for as long or as well as has the W.T.R.C. Consider the longevity of these races: Cottonpatch Runs-16 years; Horseshoe Bend Canyon Spring Frolic-16 years; Buffalo Wallow-15 years; Levelland Lope-8 years; and the Firecracker Runs, Texas' Oldest Continuous Road Race, in its 20th year. Just the names alone attest to the unique character and spirit which the W.T.R.C. brings to each of its events.

From the early days when a stopwatch would be left at the start line and each finisher would clock in the next, to the semi-Star Wars timing devices we use today, there is one factor that has remained constant - that although the names have changed, there have always been people who have felt that it was an important enough thing to have made the sacrifices of time and energy to keep it alive over the years. In our disposable society that seems to worship immediacy and self-gratification and to regard tradition with cynicism, it is a truly valuable possession to have some things that are constant and don't change.

This is not to allege that the W.T.R.C. is of some cosmic importance, although we can all be proud of the many worthwhile causes and organizations which we have assisted over the years. We are not, however, going to end world hunger or achieve world peace. Perhaps we can, nevertheless, preserve the spirit of universality that there is in the coming together once a month of people of different ideas, backgrounds and motivations to share together something that is so special to them individually. To me, this invitation to a shared experience promoting the peace of mind that comes in the enjoyment of running is truly the fountainhead of the W.T.R.C.

To those who have been in the club for some years, the next time you're at one of these races, think back on past years at that particular run. I'll bet you come up with at least one or two memories or stories about the course, someone you met or ran with, the weather, or something that happened that makes that run special to you. And as you're on the course, take in all of the familiar sights and surroundings and appreciate the security that there is in things that don't change - the hills of Buffalo, that lovely stretch near the finish at Horseshoe Bend, and even the endless fields and furrows at Brownfield.

To our new members - we hope you come to know the sense of continuity and tradition and become a continuing part of it as you return to these places through the years. Long after the trophies have found their way into the closet and the P.R. times are just entries into the log book, the memories of the people and places of the W.T.R.C. will remain as things of true and lasting value.

So with real gratitude to those who founded, nurtured and preserved the West Texas Running Club, those of us involved now hope we can do as well. As the baseball ad says, "The tradition continues . . . the memories are waiting." We hope everyone who can will come out to Brownfield on the 4th to wish the Grande Dame a happy 20th, pick up a great T shirt and help celebrate and preserve the continuing spirit and tradition of the good ol' West Texas Running Club.

Joe Post

# Be Where I Am Not Expected To Be

by WTRC Member **George Stern**

from the editor — I first saw George at the August 2023 HOT Dam race. There's a picture of him and his friends in the 2023 August/September WTRC Newsletter. George wears a sign when he is running with his guide indicating he is blind and deaf. I and many others in the WTRC are inspired by George's perseverance as a runner but, of course, there's always so much more to a person and I asked George if he



July 2024  
Firecracker Run

would be willing to tell us more about himself... and he agreed! I think you will be encouraged and inspired by his story. Thank you George for your story!

**for sure! Could you tell us about your history -- how long you've been blind and deaf and how, over time, what you have learned and done to live and be a part of today's society? How do you communicate with others?**

I was born in Jamaica and immigrated to the States as a toddler. I lived in South Florida until the age of 20, when I moved to Lubbock to attend Texas Tech, neither of which (the city or the university) I'd ever heard of before. My parents and two younger sisters still live in Florida – they say Texas weather is too crazy.

**2. I have been a part of the WTRC for the past 12 years or so and you are the first club member and runner I am aware of who is blind and deaf. Watching you run the club races is inspiring**



August 2023  
HOT Dam

I've been completely blind since I was two and a half years old, and started losing hearing around age 3 or 4. I communicate by talking and listening to people, mostly, aided by hearing aids and tactile cues. Deaf-blindness is, like most of reality, less a specific cut-and-dried situation and more.. variable, blended. What I do to be a part of today's society is be where I'm not expected to be - whether by others or myself - and cultivate friends who are willing to challenge assumptions about what's "possible" or "normal." I also ask the question "why" a lot -- a lot of good and miraculous things never happen because people don't question the status quo.

**3. How long have you been a runner and what led you to begin running? Are there other activities that you enjoy and participate in?**



2023 HOT Dam (Jerry Dwyer is 253)

I grew up in an era when adults believed in recess and physical play for kids -- believed in and made space for it. This meant sliding, jumping, swimming, climbing, skipping, rolling... and running, among other things. I was in the full throes of being a martial artist – Brazilian Jiu-jitsu and Judo – when I read Born to Run in 2011 and became truly interested in running as a lifestyle. I'd say "runner" became an indelible identity of mine around 2018, when I started running with Jerry Dwyer, David Weaver, and others in the Tech Terrace running crew.

...continued next page

George with Eddy Morelock  
April 2024 Buddy Holly Run



**4. For most of the club races I've seen you participate in you were running with Eddy Morelock. How did you connect with Eddie and how did you two come to the point where you are running together? Are there others who run with you? If so, who are they and how did you connect with them?**

My very first running partner ever in Lubbock was a lady named Anita Page. She helped me learn the university campus when I first arrived, in the course of which we discovered a mutual interest in running. Turns out that running through is a fabulous way to learn a new campus; the epitome of active learning. Injury and grand-children took Anita out of

the running, and I had only sporadic runs with other friends until desperation led me to reach out. Funnily enough, it was Anita who knew Jerry by reputation and connected us. Through Jerry, I came to know other runners, several of whom would rotate as guides, depending on schedules and injuries. Eddy became my primary guide when Jerry decamped to Ole Miss; prior to that I knew him mainly as a passing laundry-scented breeze.

**5. You have run in several WTRC races. Which one has been your favorite and why? Have you participated in races outside of the WTRC? If so, could you list a few of them and tell us what are your favorites and why?**

Which was the one with the long hills and the rained-out medal ceremony? That is my favourite thus far: firstly because of the cleansing shower, and secondly because it showed me the payoffs of intentional, targeted training. The first time I'd met hills, I had to walk them and was still wiped out. This time, fortified by several practice runs through a parking garage, I was able to tackle lengthy hills at a sustained run.

**6. What other things occupy your time? Maybe a job or hobbies or other activities?**

I'm a grad student in the College of Education at Texas Tech and a teaching assistant in the Teacher Education Department, all of which accounts for a great deal of time. Aside from that, I'm an actor and playwright for a local community theatre, a gardener, a cook who likes throwing dinner parties, and a devoted dog parent.



George with Candi, a pet, and his Seeing Eye dog

**7. What all is most important to you, George, and why?**

Treating others as I want to be treated, challenging assumptions – both others' and my own – and pursuing excellence in all thing -- because that's how the world becomes a better place.

**8. What plans and/or goals do you have for your future?**

I want to look like Terry Dalton when I grow up. In the meantime... I'll make sure my people, my community, stays fed: mind, body, and soul.

# Deb's Five Favorite Race Medals

... the latest installment of Debbie Gelber's "Five Faves"!

## Medals, medals medals...

Everyone loves race medals, myself included!

I thought I would share with you my 5 favorite marathon medals this month. Before I do, let me say that WTRC has upped its game in the race medal department these past few years. Those Buffalo Wallow Half medals are terrific and one of my favorites is the Loop the Lake medal. Great job WTRC!

So, with that said, I have narrowed my list down to only marathon/ultra distance medals. Sometimes the half distance of these races has the same exact medal. Sorry, I'm not a fan of that. If you do twice the work, the medal should be different. That's my opinion anyway!



### In 5<sup>th</sup> Place: Tyler Rose Marathon

Tyler Rose was my very first marathon back in 2010. Although not around anymore, the race took place during the annual Rose Festival. We also received a yellow rose bush! I killed that plant long ago, but at least I have my beautiful medal to commemorate my first marathon!



### In 4<sup>th</sup> Place: Pittsburgh Marathon

This wonderful medal is from my hometown of Pittsburgh, PA. I ran my 3<sup>rd</sup> marathon at the Pittsburgh Marathon in 2012 and crossed 5 different bridges along the course. I worked hard for this beautiful medal. It is not an easy course, but I'm glad I got to run in my old stomping grounds!



### In 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Big Sur Marathon

Of all my marathon medals, I think the Big Sur medals are the most unique. They are handcrafted in clay by a local sculptor. You can read about the history of these beautiful medals here: <https://www.runnersworld.com/runners-stories/a20862046/the-story-behind-those-big-sur-medallions/>

And since I ran the Boston to Big Sur Challenge both years that I ran Big Sur, I got an extra challenge medal each year. They are so awesome!





## In 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: New Year's Double

I discovered the Allen, TX New Year's Double race series back in 2014 when I started diving into back-to-back races. I loved the idea of running out one year on New Year's Eve and running in the next year on New Year's Day. So, in 2014, I ran two marathons in two days and got these really cool medals with a challenge plate to attach them to.

Then I heard about the Double-Double the next year and decided it would be an awesome thing to do. So, in 2015 on New Year's Eve, I ran a 5k, waited about an hour and ran a marathon, then on New Year's Day 2016, I ran another 5k and an hour later, another marathon for a total of 58 miles in 2 days. The challenge plate and medals were gorgeous! When I heard that the people who ran the same challenge, but half marathons instead of marathons got the exact same medals, that was enough to make me sign up for the half distances plus the 5ks the next year. Fate had another story to tell...

I got food poisoning the night before the first races and ended up running all four races sick as a dog! I got my medals though!

Needless to say, I haven't been back since then!

## In 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Texas Marathon

After the final Double-Double fiasco, I wanted to find a new New Year's race! The Texas Marathon down in Kingwood, TX occurs on New Year's Day every year.

What do I love about these medals? They are as big as my head! My medal rack needed a bit of reinforcement to accommodate 3 of these beauties. I also love the fact that you don't get to see the medal before the race. They have a big unveiling ceremony right before the race starts. Half marathoners get a smaller, but still beautiful version.



## Honorable mention: Cowtown Marathon

The only reason Cowtown did not hit my top 5 is that for the past 3 or 4 years, the marathon medals have all been puzzle pieces. I believe this is a money grabber scheme so that you will run every year so you can complete the puzzle. I don't like it, especially since I like to do different distances each year.

I DO love the challenge medals though. They are amazing! The 5k and 10k medals are awesome too! So, as soon as the dang puzzle pieces are done, I'll move Cowtown up to my top five!

That's it for another edition of Deb's Five Faves!

If you would like to read more about the races I have mentioned, check out my blog: <https://debrunsto50.wordpress.com/>

***Do you have an idea for a Favorite Five article? Let me know!***

# Getting To Know Fellow WTRC Members

From the editor.....

Every so often I like to ask several of our members to give us a little insight into who they are, what motivates them (especially to run!), what is important to them, how they

became involved with the WTRC and even pass along some wisdom they have gained along their journey.

As is usual, several responded and I am continually encouraged, motivated and strengthened by their stories. If you happen to meet any of these fellow members give them a thanks for opening themselves up to the rest of us!!

## From Natalie Scanlon:

I was born and raised in the Midwest (Minnesota for the first 18 years of my life, then to Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI). I moved to Lubbock back in 2009 to complete my Master's degree and PhD in Clinical Psychology from TTU. I met my husband and best friend here, both of whom are now runners and WTRC members! My husband and I have a son named Lachlan "LJ" who thoroughly enjoys running with us and being in WTRC. I think partly that comes from running in utero while I was pregnant with him :)



My bestie and I typically train for various races throughout the year, and the WTRC monthly runs keep us on track. Last year, we trained for the Mayor's race, and this year we are training for a 25k trail run in Palo Duro in October. My training runs with her are truly therapy for me.



I will give full credit to Hope and Bryan Pacheco for telling us about the WTRC when we moved back to Lubbock in 2022. When my mother-in-law moved here in October of last year, we convinced her to become a member too. We have gotten to know and become close to so many cool people through the WTRC.

Advice to get started with running- Reframe the relationship you have with running and/or working out. Rather than it being a thing to do and check off the list, think of it as a lifestyle and part of the daily/weekly routine. Your body and brain need the movement!



## ***From Aleisha English***

***1. Tell us some about yourself -- where you grew up, what you do for work (including our stay-at-home parent!), what you enjoy doing in "spare" time, and other items of interest about you.***

Hello WTRC members! My name is Aleisha English and I love to run! I was born in Scotland and grew up as a "TCK" -- Third Culture Kid -- in a missionary family. We moved to the United States when I was 6 to the Sunshine State in Gainesville, Florida! Talk about culture shock! We lived there for about 6 years and then moved to Texas for another drastic change from flip-flops to cowboy boots in the small town of Canadian, Texas where my love for running was sparked in the 7th grade while running Cross Country and Track. I am proud to say I am a Texas Tech Alumni with a degree in Nutrition, Human Sciences, and Addictive Disorders and Recovery Studies. I am a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor-I, Certified Personal Trainer, Anti-trafficking Consultant, and owner of Grit Meets Grace. When I am not working I enjoy spending time with my three children -- Grayson, Jonah, and Penelope. We love biking, swimming, camping, fishing, painting, and playing cards or board games.

***2. What do you do to get ready for a race?***

In order to prepare for a race I train consistently leading up to race day. I plan my training based on the distance of the race. This year I have tried to focus on shorter distance races and injury prevention through a well-balanced training regimen consisting of strength training, mobility, agility, yoga, and adequate recovery time. My running days are based on a two-week rotation because with all the other events of life I find it difficult to get the miles in with the training-specific sessions I strive for in a week -- so, I stretched it out to two week rotation. I run 3-4 days per week with a cycle stretched out over two weeks consisting of 2 long runs, an interval session, a speed work or track workout, 2 easy aerobic runs, running drills, and strength training. I spend every Friday focused on recovery with yoga, massage and a deep foam rolling session. I focus on balanced nutrition and I always eat my classic "Race Day Oats" 90 minutes before a race. I've included the recipe for anyone who would like to try them.

"Race Day Oats" Ingredients

- 1/3 cup oatmeal
- 1/8 cup banana or 3 sliced strawberries
- 1 drizzle of honey
- 1 tbs half & half or 1 tbs peanut butter

Prepare: Boil 1/2 cup water, add oats and let sit for 1-2 minutes. Stir in your choice of Half & Half or Peanut butter but don't do both. Top with sliced banana or sliced strawberries and drizzle with honey. And enjoy 90 minutes before a run.

***3. How did you become involved in the WTRC?***

I heard about the WTRC at a group run at *FootTech*. Then, a few years later, I ran my first official WTRC race at the Buffalo Wallow Half Marathon and then gradually started attending more and decided to become a Plus Member at the beginning of 2024. I have loved having the accountability for my training -- knowing there is a race each month helps me stay consistent and motivated to train.



#### *4. Do you have friends you like to run with or are you mostly a "run alone" person?*

I've been mostly a "run alone" person ever since I started training for my first marathon in 2014. My dad had recently been diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer. Finding out someone close to you only has a limited amount of time left on earth is difficult but that someone being your father shakes you all the way down to your core. Suddenly life goes from an adventure with unlimited possibilities to a ticking clock. The urgency to cram monumental moments of a life span into a shortened timeline was on overdrive. I had a list of things I wanted my dad to be around for, many of them were beyond my control but the one thing within my control was the marathon. I began my marathon training block the very same week my dad started his first round of chemotherapy. We were in the fight together! I ran the Panhandle Marathon here in Lubbock in May of 2014 with my dad at the finish line. My dad passed away the following month in June of 2014. My love for running grew stronger and I continued to pursue the completion of the passion items on that list finishing my first IRONMAN the following June of 2015. It wasn't until 2018 that I started learning about the different run clubs and group runs in Lubbock and I have been joining up with them ever since.



#### *5. What does running do for you?*

Running is the time and space I use to clear my mind, release stress, let go of stored emotion, sort through the difficulties of life, and challenge myself. Running gives me a sense of accomplishment. Running is a place of safety for me that has helped me retrain my nervous system to tolerate stress after deep tragedy, trauma, and loss. Running is so much more than just running, it is a time of restoration.

#### *6. What race or races are you getting ready for?*

I am currently training for the WTRC HOT Dam race in August and will be running the 5 mile race. Then I plan to run the Shallowater Stampede in September, a half marathon in September, the Red Raider Road Race in October and then the Buffalo Wallow Race in November for my RUNAVERSARY with WTRC. These will be followed by the WTRC Turkey Trot and the WTRC Toys for Tots Race in December, finishing out the year at the BMW Dallas Half Marathon.



#### *7. If you were asked for advice to get started running, what advice would you give?*

If you are starting from ground zero, Just START! Don't overthink it! Get a good pair of running shoes and start with walking 30 minutes a day 3 times a week. After 3 weeks of walking 30 minutes you just might feel like running! A combination of running and walking is A-OKAY! If you run at all you are a runner! Slowly over time it all adds up, miles are miles. It doesn't matter if you run fast or slow, just keep going and you will surprise yourself with what you are capable of. Build up to a 3 mile base 3-4 times a week before starting a training block for a longer distance race. Sign up for a 5k, then a 10k, then a half marathon, and then a marathon! Join a run club and find a way to make it fun and enjoy it. Having the ability to move your body in a healthy way is a gift you can unwrap each and every day if you wake up, lace up, and get out the door.



My name is **Luke Martin** and I am originally from East Tennessee. My wife and I moved to Texas in 2022 as I had accepted a job as a Sales Manager based here in Lubbock. I travel extensively as my territory includes half of Texas and all of New Mexico. When I am not working I love to hunt, fish, golf, and stay active! I am an avid outdoorsman and I am passionate about conservation and protecting our natural resources for generations to come.

I played baseball in high school and college, and I would run occasionally for training purposes. I had entered a few local 5Ks and 8Ks years ago as a fun challenge to break up the monotony of my workouts. This is where I first gained an interest in running, but I mainly focused on weight lifting for workouts. I decided to start running again in September of 2023. I was beginning to feel some aches and pains from some surgeries and stress from lifting. I am also no longer a college athlete and felt that my body was slowing down and wanted

more from my fitness. I started very slow by running 1-2 miles a few times a week and slowly increased frequency and mileage each week. I use Strava to log all of my workouts, and was really pleased to see how much growth could happen with consistent training. At the conclusion of 2023, I decided that my goal for 2024 was to run 1000 miles!

I am a lone runner and when in Lubbock I love to train by running around my neighborhood or at the Lubbock Lake Landmark. I typically try to run between 20 to 30 miles each week as this helps me stay on track for my 1000 mile year. I am still learning new training techniques and how I can become a better runner. What I love most about running is that there is unlimited potential for training goals. As runners we are able to push our pace, our distance, or simply find new trails to run. I have also really enjoyed joining the running community as it is extremely supportive. We are all running our own races and facing our own individual challenges but we love supporting each other in our fitness journey. Lastly, I love being outside in God's creation each day - rain, snow, sunshine, or West Texas wind -- I love all of it!

I am super thankful to have found the WTRC in late 2023. My first race was the Red Raider Road Race in October and this led to me joining as a member for the 2024 season. I run almost every day in the chase of my 1000 mile goal and love running our club races each month as it gives me somewhere new to run each month and see how I compare to other runners in the area. My next goal is to run a half marathon and I am super excited to tackle that challenge at the Buffalo Wallow later this year.

My advice to any new runners is to never be ashamed of your starting point. We all have different starting points in our running careers. I am still in the infancy of my running career but I have seen constant improvement by being consistent. I would also advise getting involved in the WTRC as they offer a different race each month with 2-3 race lengths for each one. This will help establish a community for you and give you a goal to work toward each month. If you see me at a race please reach out so I can cheer you on!



My name is **Crysty Johnston**. I grew up in Louisiana and attended Southeastern Louisiana University and Louisiana State University (Geaux Tigers!). I began running when I was 14 years old. I chose Cross Country/Track on a whim because none of the other PE classes appealed to me, and I fell in love with it! My dad didn't have any prior experience with running. He was more familiar with football and baseball, but my passion became his. He learned everything he could about the science of running and coached me. It was a great gift to share this with my dad. I ran on four state champion cross country teams in Louisiana. We challenged ourselves, made wonderful friends, and developed a life-long love of the sport.

In college, I met my sweetheart, Todd, and we moved first to Austin for his law school and then to his hometown of Lubbock. Not long after we settled here, we added fraternal twins, Ben and Laura, to our family, and then eight years later, Anna was born. I have continued to run throughout my adult years. I consider running like an old friend who has been with me through it all. Running clears my head, makes me feel strong, and gives me time to think and process all that happens in my busy life. My family enjoys running too (except Laura who loves reading and art more). Todd and Anna enjoy doing the races each month with me, and my son Ben runs cross country and track for Lubbock High. I have absolutely loved watching Ben compete and share in something that has given me so much joy. It can be tough to find shared interests between a 17 year old boy and his mom, but running has provided that.

My favorite place to run is my parent's land in Louisiana. When my dad knows we are visiting, he cuts a trail through their pastures for us. You never know what you might see on a run there -- turkey, deer, rabbits or even a stray cow. It's a very peaceful place to run.

We first found WTRC when we participated in the Turkey Trot a few years ago. It is so much fun, and we appreciate how supportive and nice all the runners are. The races are laid back and well-organized. I am very grateful to all the people who work hard to make the events so successful. I use the races to challenge myself since the distances are generally longer than my every day running and the terrain often has hills and other demanding features. To prepare for races, I run about 4 days each week, around 18 miles total. I also love doing yoga at Tribute on the days I do not run. The hot yoga helps me build strength and flexibility. My advice to those just getting started is to find some great music and just hit the road. Often the hardest part is just lacing up your shoes and going. Once you are out there, you will have fun. It doesn't matter what your time is just put in the distance and it will get easier every day.



## Running Heavy by Kelly Podzemny

Hello there! My name is Kelly Podzemny – pronounced “pod zim knee.” I’m from Amarillo originally and have bounced back and forth between there and Lubbock a few times. I’ve lived in Lubbock for about 11 years all together. I like to run (or “ruck”—more on that later) in races in both cities.

I’m a social media manager by trade and am currently the assistant director of social media for Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC). I’ve also managed social media for United Supermarkets and various parts of Texas Tech University (TTU). Aside from running and rucking, I also enjoy craft beer, reading and art. You’ll find me at the First Friday Art Trail downtown most months.

If you’re already familiar with who I am, you probably think of me as that crazy guy who carries a heavy backpack in all the races. What I’m doing is called “rucking.” Put simply, it’s walking or running with weight stowed in a backpack or “rucksack.” I first started by accident early during the COVID-19 pandemic when gyms closed. I had no idea about rucking, but for a challenge during the pandemic I was taking dumbbells in an old bookbag to the middle school track near my apartment. Then someone told me what I was doing was an actual sport! I’ve been doing it ever since and have invested in better equipment designed specifically for rucking.

Rucking is a little bit cardio, a little bit strength training. Research has shown it burns significantly more calories than walking alone, while being less intense than running. I probably break into a run more than most ruckers. Traditionally rucking is more of a walk or march. Avid ruckers will tell you that “doing things that suck” builds strength, endurance and character.

The question I get asked most often about rucking is: “How much are you carrying?” The answer is usually 30 pounds when I’m at a race or want to ruck faster with a group. I also have a 45-pound plate that I carry when I’m rucking alone at a more leisurely pace. If you want to get into rucking, starting even lighter than 30 is respectable too. GORUCK suggests people who weigh 150 or less carry 20 pounds and people heavier than 150 should carry 30. Rucking is very flexible and versatile; you can carry whatever weight works best for you.



I’m currently embarking on what I call my “Year of the 10K.” It’s my goal for 2024 to ruck in at least one 10K race per a month. So far so good! I’ve rucked in The Fort Worth Cowtown 10K, several WTRC races and a fun Superman-themed virtual race. My next race is the Hotter ‘n Hell trail run in Wichita Falls in late August. I’m still trying to decide which race will be the grand finale in December. It’s got to be a good one, right?!

Between races I ruck often with the RUN LBK crew. I attend the Monday and Wednesday night brewery runs almost religiously. That community is so welcoming and has become some of my best friends. While I was already participating in races it is their encouragement that’s inspired me to push harder and has played a part in my finally joining West Texas Running Club.

If you see me out on the course, slap me on the rucksack and say hey!



# HOT Dam Run

August 10, 2024 Race Report



Today the HOT Dam Run wasn't so hot — meaning, the weather for today was just great for a race! Temperature was in the low 70s (almost chilly :-), some breeze...just an atypical day for this time of year. Wendy Johnston did an outstanding job directing the race. We had 253 runners — the largest turnout since 2011. This has been the trend for the WTRC race all season long —

the running community continues to thrive in the Lubbock area.

Of the 253 finishers, 122 ran the 2-mile course and 131 completed the 5-mile challenge. The 5-mile overall winner, Xavier Sanchez, finished in 27:59 — a

5:35 average pace!. Female 5-milers were paced by Emily Newcome who completed the race in 38:16. The overall winner for the 2-mile race was Adrian Gonzalez who finished in 11:20. Leading all female runners was Berklee Lummus who finished in 14:43. Great runs all!



Great race, Wendy!

There was a great turnout of volunteers to staff the water-stations and turnarounds and unload/load the trailer. Thank you to all the volunteers: Terry Dalton, Kyle Van Zandt, Carol Danko, Corrine Forrest, David Higgins, Justin Dawsey, Les Kinman, Debbie Gelber, Lydia Turner, Kim Hovland, Bill Felton, and Ron Lubowicz. A special thanks to **RUN LBK** for supporting the WTRC by staffing one of the waterstops — Chad Beights and Robin Curry —

and by pulling the WTRC trailer — thanks, Caleb Weston. Thank you, Riannon Rowley, for taking pictures for today's race! **Of course, an extra-special thanks to the HOT Dam Race Director — Wendy Johnston!**



37th ANNUAL "HOT Dam RUN" 5 MILE  
WEST TEXAS RUNNING CLUB'S ANNUAL AUGUST RACE  
(Since 1988) USATF CERTIFIED #TX13139ETM  
NEW AGE-GROUP RECORDS

AGE	NAME	TOWN	AGE	TIME	YEAR
<b>5-Mile</b>					
30-34	Wilson Kigen	Plainveiw	30	26:38	1988 Oldest!
13-15	Christina Vasquez	Lubbock	15	34:37	1989 Oldest!
65-69	Martha Martinez	Colorado City	68	48:25	2024 new
	Old: PJ Sullivan	Lubbock	69	48:54	2016
<b>2-Mile</b>					
10-12	Elias McDonough	Lubbock	11	13:08	2024 new
	Old: Riki Sampson	Lubbock	11	13:12	2014
	& Ryan Whitworth	Lubbock	12	13:12	2017 Tie
55-59	John Corelis	Lubbock	58	12:29	2024 new
	Old: Jackie Cannon	Amarillo	55	14:15	2011
20-24	Ellie Reyna	Lubbock	24	15:03	2024 new
	Old: Lindsey Lamontagne	Lubbock	22	15:29	2009
50-54	Michaela Jansen	Lubbock	51	15:10	2024 new
	Old: Connie Waddell	Wolfforth	51	15:40	2016
75+	Pj Sullivan	Lubbock	79	19:39	2024 new



WTRC races are found at [wtrunning.com](http://wtrunning.com)



West Texas Running Club



[www.instagram.com/wtrunning/](http://www.instagram.com/wtrunning/)

The monthly WTRC business meetings are held on the **first Tuesday of the month** at 6:00 p.m.

We are currently meeting at the Texas Tech Credit Union  
1801 N. Texas Tech Pkwy (back entry)

All members are welcome to attend!  
*Please check with a Board member before coming just to be sure of the meeting place.*

I'm glad for you to contact me:  
stevegerman5@gmail.com

## WTRC Members –

We have 5 more races left:

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

So... plenty of time to earn more miles toward the 66 Mile or Trailblazers Clubs!

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 :-)



2024 HOT Dam

WTRC Newsletter Editor:  
Steve German  
stevegerman5@gmail.com