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From the President's Desk

I have good news! We're reinstituting our social get together at a local running store. Good Times Running Company has graciously agreed to open their store to us for this event. It's got a new and improved name, too – KARC After Dark. And GTRC will offer a 20% discount on your purchases that evening. Our aim is to hold one of these events each quarter where we offer pizza, beer and wine, and a speaker. So, mark your calendars – 7:00pm, Thursday, February 22nd will be our first event. We'll have an invited speaker - Kelly Ramey, organizer of the Houston Wellness Project 5k there to tell us about their initiative.

The Wellness Project's initiative is to provide events to improve the health of active people. In that regard they offer a free, local, no-pressure 5k that you can do each month. If you've never pinned on a bib before this is a great way to start. Or maybe you're an experienced runner and you'd just like to stay race ready or you missed your tempo run. For any reason this is a good event in which to participate. It's run by the Houston Wellness Project and happens the last Sunday of each month at the Fun Fair Positive Soccer fields. You can just show up and run or if you register ahead you'll get a bib and your race time will be recorded. Race timing is provided by our very own Jack McClintic and his company - Run Houston Timing. You'll find these races listed in our Upcoming Events section. Just click here and let the 5k-ing begin!

And, for those of you who might just want pie (it could be pizza pie this year!) KARC will again be throwing down the gauntlet to all club members who want to do a fun 3.14 mile run. Of course that'll be on Wednesday evening, March 14th. We'll see who among us can run exactly 3.14 miles on the curvy trails of Willow Fork Park. There will be prizes, too!

I wish you happy and healthy running!
Mike Masse

Rick's Training Corner

Because we do most of our runs in and around Houston, we get really good at running on flat surfaces for long distances. This isn't too much of an issue if you plan on doing local races. I do enjoy running the Chevron Houston Marathon (or Aramco Half Marathon). The course is generally flat (except where it crosses Westpark) and predictable. However, I've also enjoyed running a few out of town races (Boston, New York, Big Sur and the Napa-to-Sonoma half come to mind). Each of these courses had significant hills. If you are planning an out-of-town race, you should check the course profile. Chances are you will encounter hills, so you should be prepared. In any event, incorporating hills occasionally into your long run schedule is a good idea.

Running hills builds leg strength and stamina, which is the reason our marathon and half marathon training programs incorporate 4 weeks of hill training before hitting the track. In addition to building strength, running hills also increases aerobic capacity and increases the efficiency by which your body uses oxygen.

When starting up a hill on a long run, it's natural for your pace to slow somewhat. Let it – think about exerting an even effort, not an even pace. You probably should tweak your form. Think about raising your knees more and picking up your feet, just like climbing stairs. Your stride rate might be increased slightly by taking smaller steps. If the hill is steep, lean forward slightly with your back straight. Use your arms to drive your body. Stay relaxed and resist the urge to tense up as you climb the hill. Control your breathing. On long hills, break that portion of your run into smaller, more manageable pieces by focusing on an object or position 20 – 50 yards ahead of you. When you approach it, find another object and repeat until you reach the top of the hill.

You should also focus on your form when running downhill, especially if the course is steep. When cresting a hill, transition your form from that used on the uphill climb to one more suitable for flat runs. As the course steepens, try to keep your body perpendicular to the ground, with your center of gravity over your lead leg. Leaning too far forward will cause you to run too fast without control. Leaning too far back will cause you to "ride the breaks", creating more stress on your joints. Practice striking the ground with the

ball of your foot (with knee slightly bent) rather than your heel (and straight leg). Avoid the tendency to race down the hill. Again, think about exerting an even effort. Relax, let the gravity do the work and give your heart rate a chance to lower (if it was elevated during the climb up the hill).

This spring, we have several members who are training for the Boston Marathon. Many of them have started to make the trip to Bellville on Saturdays for their long runs to take advantage of gentle, rolling hills. There is another group that goes to New Ulm (about 20 miles west northwest of Sealy) for the same purpose. I've run both places. While New Ulm might be slightly better at imitating the Boston Marathon course, I prefer Bellville because of its accessibility (it's a bit closer), the route has less traffic, and there are bathrooms at the starting point. The route I've run out of Bellville is a simple out-and-back course. The hills are a bit gentler and more numerous than New Ulm. Both locations are much more scenic than our usual routes into George Bush Park (especially when the bluebonnets are in bloom). If you are interested in trying one of these routes out, let me know and we can arrange a KARC road trip!

I hope to see you out on the trails!

Rick Bozanich

New Members

Please join me in extending a warm welcome to our new members: Naiomi Belegbayar, Chao Li, Sunitha Yadagiri, Mike Magill, Kendrin Wright, Heather Lovell, Kyle Kang, Valerie Davis, Belle Butler, Misty and Deo Mahase, Estela Garcia, Deborah Pirruccio, Ki Won Kang, Valerie Davis, Belle Butler, Adam Ring, Kris Colquette and Jessie Rollow.

Member Profile

If a picture is worth a thousand words then Khurram Mir has already written volumes for me and his other Strava friends. How he manages to get a pic of himself on most runs – and while using good form – is a mystery to me. But, keep reading and you'll learn more from his words below!

Hello fellow runners!

I am really excited to write to you all and share my story. For those of whom I have not had the privilege of meeting yet, my name is Khurram Mir. I recently just completed my first marathon in January and I have many members of the club to thank for their continued support and feedback.

To tell you a little bit about me, I will have to transport you all to a desert, a tiny island kingdom in the Persian Gulf. I was born and raised in Bahrain, where there is only one season - Summer. Growing up I was never much of a competitive runner. The track star in my family was my older sister who has been an inspiration to all the siblings.

My running grounds in Bahrain during my past visit.

The only time I can remember running is when we had to train for soccer. Though never competitive, I have participated in a handful of 5K/10K fun runs. My goal was always to run the length of the course without any time goals.

It was not until 2015 that I started tossing around the idea of a marathon when I saw a friend wearing the Portland Marathon t-shirt. What started off as a conversation quickly turned into a bet of whether I could complete a marathon or not. Jumping into a full marathon was quite a leap for me. I knew that I had to respect the distance and be committed to the training. I spent the majority of 2015 and 2016 working on various facets of my running goals.

From counting calories, cross training, strength training; my goal was losing weight and being in a position to complete a marathon.

When I felt I was ready I gave it a shot. On Thanksgiving, November 23rd 2016 I ran my "unofficial" marathon. I completed it in 5:51:17. A few takeaways from that day were that I can run, walk, or crawl a marathon, I need to manage my diet during my training season, race day and post race, and boy I could use some crowd cheer.

First unofficial marathon at Memorial Park

In 2017, I joined KARC with the goal of training for the Chevron Houston Marathon. The club provided me with the platform to come and enjoy the runs with fellow Katy runners. Over the course of the year I was able to make countless friendships that have continued to support me on and off my runs.

It was not until the Houston Half Marathon that I knew I could even run as fast as I completed the race. I was shocked, amazed and a bit emotional to see my performance. No other sport has moved me as much as running has and for that I am grateful. Following my Houston Half performance I adjusted my goal time for the Chevron Marathon. At first I wanted to break four hours and in

the week leading up to the marathon I was confident in a three-hour thirty minute finish time. Racing is hard. It is a work in progress. But I am blessed and grateful to have amazing runners around me that share running hacks that allow me to be better every race.

My first long distance race - Houston Half

My first marathon - Chevron Houston

So, if you wonder what is next for me - My goal is to run the six major marathons and I am excited to be running the Chicago Marathon in 2018. I am taking the off-season to work on my weaknesses and perfect what I have learned over the past year.

Apart from running (which consumes most of my activity time now), I also enjoy photography, rock climbing, cycling, skiing and traveling. I have been fortunate enough to be able to train in various parts of the world and be true to my commitment to running a marathon.

For all newbie runners like me my only advice is be committed, train hard and enjoy. You will reap the rewards.

Happy Running!
Khurram

Group Runs

Remember to come out and join other Club members for our group runs. We meet three days each week. While none of the group runs are "mandatory" we think that as members of a running Club you'll appreciate the opportunity to join a group on the run. And, you can always use the Facebook group to arrange for running partners – similar pace, similar distance.

Tuesday – Groups meet at 5:00am and 6:30pm, Cinco Ranch JH Track. This is where we normally do speedwork. If you're not familiar with track runs or are just not ready for quick running – no worries. Come on out anyway to take advantage of the soft surface. And you'll never be further away than 1/8 of a mile away from another runner!

Thursday – 6:30pm, Crosspoint Community Church parking lot. We run the Rick Rice park and the Mason Creek hike and bike trail. This is for any distance and pace, though, many are doing their "tempo" runs at this group run.

Saturday – Groups meet at the Sergeant Hatch Park (aka the CopShop) at various times from 5:00am to 7:00am for long runs of various paces and distances. Find your running partners on FB. And we always meet after the run at Corner Bakery Café on the south I-10 feeder road and Greenhouse for coffee and camaraderie.

Getting Together

On January 20th several members gathered at the Braman Winery and Brewery in Richmond for camaraderie, drinks, snacks and live music. It was a fun way to catch up and share our Houston Marathon race weekend stories – and other stories.

Remember that we always meet for coffee and camaraderie on Saturday mornings at Corner Bakery Café after our long runs. It's on Greenhouse on the south I-10 feeder road, just behind Chick-fil-A. Normally, we are there around 8am. So, please come out and join us after your run or even if you don't run. It's fun to catch up. And with the membership running from different locations, by different routes, and at different paces it's hard to see more

than a couple people on the run. At coffee we can sit down and visit with the larger group.

Club Runners Review

Cruise excursions, muddy trails, rough concrete pavement – we run it all. And for good causes, too. Now that the big race is behind us, many of the club members are venturing out to new and exciting places. If you haven't yet pinned on a bib then please think about doing it. There's nothing like the excitement and sense of community that comes from participating in a road or trail race.

January – Castaway Cay 5k – Freeport, Bahamas

Paul Chapman	19:30 (2nd overall, January 26th)
Denise Voyles	time not recorded (January 10th)

Denise represents the club in the Bahamas.

Paul shows off his Castaway 5k hardware.

January 21st – Choco Loco 10k, 5k – Houston, TX

Brenda Davis	1:09:37 (10k)
Pamela Wilmon	35:15 (1st in AG, 5k)

January 27th – Dusk to Dawn Half Marathon/5k – Fulshear, TX

Tammy Bearden	48:29 (5k)
Adam Hunt	2:26:02 (First malf marathon!)
Jan Rupe	54:34 (5k)

January 27th – Running the Rose 7k – Tyler, TX

Brenda Davis	1:02:59 (2nd in AG)

Brenda with her age-group prize at the Running the Rose 7k

January 27th - Race 4 the Cure – Houston, TX

Cleo Lloyd

Jocelyn Williams

January 28th – Allstate Hot Chocolate 15k/5k – Houston, TX

Tammy Bearden	2:22:57 (15k)
Gordon Christie	1:04:05 (4th overall, 15k)
Tamiaka Coker	1:59:03 (15k)
Cindy Davis	2:17:12 (15k)
Coby Dycus	1:59:10 (15k)
Larisa Ferguson	1:59:09 (15k)
Lynn Furman	2:23:41 (15k)
Bob Furman	1:40:16 (1st in AG, 15k)
Nancy Holcomb	2:27:32 (15k)
Chrysta Lloyd	2:04:32 (15k)
Anne "Shannan" Mullaly	2:22:56 (15k)
Lisa Ozsdolay	1:26:19 (15k)
Bekah Swick	1:54:50 (15k)
Bronwyn Turner	2:17:15 (2nd in AG)
Debbie Vazquez	2:20:02 (15k)
Jocelyn Williams	1:59:10 (15k)
Pamela Willmon	1:53:19 (3rd in AG, 15k)

Tamiaka Coker, Larisa Ferguson, Jocelyn Williams and Coby Dycus

Cindy Davis, Bronwyn Turner and friend, Jill Johnson

Anne Mullaly and Tammy Bearden

Bekah Swick

Lisa Ozsdolay

January 28th – USA Fit – Marathon, Half Marathon, 5k – Sugar Land, TX

Mike Roberts	4:13:07 (marathon)
Natalie Shelton	1:50:12 (2nd in AG)
Chris Strohman	19:33 (Male Masters Winner)

January 28th – Wellness Project 5k – George Bush Park, Katy, TX

Paul Chapman	21:17 (2nd in AG, 5th overall)
Sunitha Yadagiri	49:55

February 3rd – 4th – Rocky Raccoon (100 miles) – Huntsville State Park, Huntsville TX

Nicole Berglund
Kim Johnson

February 3rd – Katy Half Marathon/5k – Katy, TX

Melissa Benjamin	1:56:46
Jennifer Bernard	1:55:36
Rafa Brazo	1:43:05
Sonia Dhodapkar (friend Maria Reed)	1:45:40 (1st female relay team)
Susan Freeman	1:46:42 (3rd in AG)
Lynn Furman	40:46 (1st in AG, 5k))
Bob Furman	2:19:21
Nancy Holcomb Jocelyn Williams	3:06:13 (relay team)
Adam Hunt	2:34:21
Vangie Ibbotson	2:28:11
Jen Ingram	22:48 (5k, Ladies Masters Winner)
Matthew Hess	22:23 (5k, 2nd in AG)
Chao Li	1:50:07
Mike Magill	2:24:59
Maria Mainieri	2:07:56
David Moore	1:50:10
Deborah Pirruccio	1:46:08
Marah Retherford	2:07:36

Arturo Reyes	1:32:32 (1st male relay team)
Khurram Mir	
Josh Ring	1:35:37
Mike Roberts	1:42:25
Neil Ruocco	1:35:02 (3rd in AG)
Tina Seaman	53:09 (5k)
Natalie Shelton	1:32:36 (1st coed relay team)
Chris Strohman	
Marjorie Broussard	1:38:23 (2nd coed relay team)
James Ingram	
Becca Nicholls	1:47:35 (3rd coed relay team)
Richard Nicholls	
Pam Sullivan	2:05:20 (relay team)
Gary Sullivan	
Terry Waltrip	2:11:05 (3rd in AG)
Kendrin Wright	1:44:55

Happy KARC members (and friend Brad Baynes) at the Katy Half Marathon (photo courtesy Arturo Reyes)

Marah Retherford and Maria Mainieri

Marjorie Broussard and James Ingram – 2nd place coed relay team.

Neil Ruocco takes 3rd place in his age group.

February 4th – Wellness Project 5k – The Heights, Houston, TX

Toni Benavides	54:46
Michelle Blackman	53:10
Lynn Furman	33:44 (1st in AG, 50th Wedding Anniversary!)
Bob Furman	37:14 (1st in AG, 50th Wedding Anniversary!)
Paul van Helmond	25:57
Sunitha Yadagiri	47:09

Feburary 3rd – Death Valley Half Marathon – Furnace Creek, Death Valley, CA

Anne Damiecka	1:52:23 (2nd in AG)

February 4th – Surf City USA Marathon – Huntington Beach, CA

Alain Ducante	4:46:51
Josh Manning	4:20:24

Alain and Josh soak up the rays and vibes after the Surf City USA Half Marathon. (photo courtesy Josh Manning)

February 10th – Rocky Raccoon 50k – Huntsville State Park, Huntsville, TX
Yan Liu 6:06:04 (2nd in AG)

Upcoming Event Calendar

The following running events are upcoming club sponsored social events or club focus races. For more information, including hyperlinks to race websites, see our calendar on www.KatyAreaRunningClub.com.

February 18th – Austin Marathon – Austin, TX – race info and registration here.

February 22nd – KARC After Dark – 7pm, Good Times Running Company, The Villagio, Wesheimer Parkway, Katy.

February 24th – Surfside Beach Marathon – Surfside Beach, TX - race info and registration here.

February 25th – Run for Wellness Free 5k – FFPS Fields, George Bush Park, Katy, TX – race info and registration here.

March 14th – KARC PI Day Challenge - Willow Fork Park, Katy, TX

March 18th – Bayou City Classic 10k and 5k – City Hall, Houston, TX – race info and registration here.

March 24-25th – Texas Independence Relay – Gonzales to Houston, TX – race info and registration here.

March 31st – KARC in the Park – Watch your emails for details on its location.

April 14th – Cow Patty Classic 10k/5k – Tompkins High School, Katy, TX – race info and registration here.