

Warm weather welcomes record 5K turnouts

A record 134 runners finished the 12th annual Run to Read 5K despite the hottest temps since perhaps the 2000 event. The old record of 114 5K finishers was set last year. This year's total might have been even higher as at least a few 15K runners who preregistered for the 5K changed their minds due to the miserable weather. Only 11 runners finished both the 15K and the 5K; the lowest total since 2001 when 6 runners did both. By contrast twenty four 15K runners doubled back last year.

The 5K walk had a record low number of finishers (9). Last year ten runners completed the walk and in 2000 a record 24 walkers finished what was then a 1.5 mile event. 55 year old Karen Clister won this year's event with a time of 36:31.6 while Fairmont resident Rudy Vincent, 56 years old, was the first male finisher in 37:26.8.

Jen Sober won both the 15K and 5K runs. The 37 year old's time in the 15K was 1:06:26.5. Sober's 5K winning time was an event age group (35-39) record 21:02.9. Her combined time for the 2 events, 1:27:29.4 also set an age group event record.

Chelsea Clark, who ran cross country and track at Fairmont Senior High this year, finished 2nd in the 5K running 21:31.3 That time was good for 8th place all time in the 5K event in the "certified era" (2002 to the present). Clark, 18 years old, also holds 5th, 7th and 9th places on that list. (McHenry, Md., resident Sober's winning time put her 4th on the same list.)

Former East Fairmont High cross country runner Jobey Knapton won the 15K in an impressive time of 54:58.2. The 21 year old Knapton was 2nd at this year's Run to Read Half Marathon with a time of 1:18:36.4. That event is held in January at Prickett's Fort State Park. Twenty five year old Woody Snoberger of Ridgeley, WV, finished 2nd in 1:02:13.8 while Fairmont resident Mark Offutt finished 3rd in 1:03:39.7 to finish 3rd. Offutt won the unofficial 15K + 5K combined title by defeating Snoberger in the 5K run 20:55.9 to 23:32.9. The Offutt's total time was 1:24:35.6 to Snoberger's 1:25:46.7.

29 year old Morgantown resident Violet Caron finished 2nd in the 15K running 1:08.46.4 while Grafton's Erika Rucker took 3rd place in 1::57.2.

T. J. Abel won the 5K with a time 17:37.4. The former Grafton High cross country runner ran cross country at Glenville State last fall. 14 year old Alex Myers was 2nd in 18:50.7 while former North Marion High's Neil Bland was 3rd in 19:02.6.

Fairmont's Chris Ruberto was less than 3 seconds from breaking Sandy Offutt's masters 5K course record of 24:14, which was set in 2002. Ruberto's time of 24:16.7 was good for 2nd place in the "certified era". She also holds 7th and 9th places on that list. Ruberto was 3rd overall in the 5K behind Sober and Clark.

Fairmont runners Drema Ford and Peggy Corley ran 26:23.0 and 26:51.9 to finish 1 – 2 in the 50 & over class. Those times were good for 2nd and 4th places for the 5K in the “certified era” among grand masters (50 & over).

Scottsdale, PA, runner Jim Banks won both the 60 & over age group in the 15K in 1:11:56.7 and the 60-69 title in the 5K in a time of 22:35.0. the 64 year old Bank’s 15K effort was the 10th best among senior grand masters (60 & over) in the “certified era” while his 5K time ranks 2nd best among senior grand masters in the certified era.

Another senior grand master, Jim Bailey of Cedarville, WV, broke the 5K course record in the 65-69 age group with his time of 25:02.7. the 69 year old Bailey’s time ranks 4th best among senior grand masters in the certified era.

Michael Wilson of Fairmont is the “last man standing” in the Run to Read Races in that he has run in all 12 Run to Read 5K’s (1999 to present). Morgantown resident Stephen Griswold competed in either the 5K run, the 5K walk or the 15K run during the event’s first 11 years. Fairmont resident Joey Herron has competed in all eleven Run to Read 15K’s. That event was added in 2000.

The net total of 210 participants broke the old record of 198 participants set in 2003. There were 60 in the 15K, 123 in the 5K (plus the eleven 15K runners who doubled up by running the 5K too), 9 walker and 18 in the mile & a half fun run/walk. The gross total of 221 participants (counting double entered runners twice) also broke the 2003 record of 219 participants. (21 runners doubled back that year. Runners came from 7 states: West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, Virginia, Delaware and North Carolina.

Female runners comprised exactly half of the finishers in the 15K; 30 out of 60. In the 5K 65 women runners finished up compared to 69 men. Race organizers are certain these percentages are record highs for this event.

Race organizers thank all the participants for their support of Literacy Volunteers of Marion County, a United Way agency. A big thank you goes out to all of our sponsors including the town of Pleasant Valley, the Times West Virginian, MCPARC, WesBanco, Pepsi, Capitol Doors, Galaxay Global, Fairmont Family Chiropractic, Bath Fitter and State Senator Roman W. Prezioso, Jr. We especially thank the Marion County Police Reserves for traffic control and we thank the city of Fairmont for the lead police car. We appreciate all our hard working, dedicated volunteers without whom this event would not be possible.

The 6th annual Run to Read Half Marathon will be changed to Sunday afternoon with a 2pm start (1-9-11). The 13th annual Run to Read 15K/5K is tentatively scheduled for June 11, 2011. This is assuming the Greater Clarksburg 10K will be held on June 18.