

# SAN ANTONIO ROADRUNNERS

## WEDNESDAY NIGHT ZOO RUN

**DISCLAIMER:** Since the Wednesday Night Zoo Run did not become part of the San Antonio Roadrunners until 2012, there is no written documentation of the Zoo Run prior to that date. Sally Rios became SARR Newsletter Editor in June, 1989. The Wednesday Night Zoo was then included in the SARR Newsletter's monthly race schedule. Prior to August, 1989, there was no mention of the Zoo Run in the SARR running schedule even though most of the run participants were SARR members. Most of the information listed is compiled from conversations with past directors.

**TITLE:** Wednesday Night Zoo Run

**DATES:** 1977 or 1983 – See “Interesting Facts” Section

**DISTANCES:** 2 Miles

### LOCATIONS HELD:

Brackenridge Park 1977 – 2000; 2006 to present  
Ft. Sam Houston 2000-2001

### RACE DIRECTORS:

1977 – 1995	Steve Smith
1996 – ????	Walter and Joan Bobrukiewiez
????	Gloria Groham
2000 – 2002	Tom Lake
2003 – 2007	No Info
2008 – 2013	Joan Bobrukiewiez
2014 - 2015	James Vavrina
2016 to current	John DiCarlo and Sally Rios – Co-Directors

## **INTERESTING FACTS:**

### **ORIGINAL REASON FOR NAME OF RACE:**

Steve Smith, a former race organizer and sports writer for the San Antonio Light and Express-News, started this race in either 1977 or 1983. Steve has provided both dates but there is no official documentation. Steve states that he started going to Brackenridge Park on Wednesdays after work to run two miles thru the park. He mentioned this to co-workers. Slowly, more co-workers started joining Steve on his Wednesday two mile run.

As the number of participants grew, the event became the Wednesday Night Zoo Run. The San Antonio Zoo has nothing to do with this event. The "Zoo Run" was included in the name of the event merely because of the Zoo's proximity to where the run took place.

NOTE: The information provided in this history is a summation of various race recaps attached to this history.

Distance has always been two miles, on Wednesday evenings, starting at 6:30 p.m. Event was/is open to all persons regardless of gender, age, or athletic abilities.

Awards were/are given to the top three male/female finishers in age groups of five year increments from age 9 and under to 80+. Awards consist of different colored ribbons: 1<sup>st</sup> place, blue; 2<sup>nd</sup> place, red; 3<sup>rd</sup> place white. During Steve Smith's tenure, ribbons were also given as awards. However, for the last run of the season, small runner trophies were given. The small trophies were one reason the number of participants increased for the last run of the season.

The location has been Brackenridge Park except for the years that the park was undergoing renovations. The race moved to Ft. Sam Houston for a year or so during this time.

The start and finish lines have moved several times but the race continues to be in Brackenridge Park.

Other than Steve Smith, the race did not "belong" to any individual or any group until 2012 when the San Antonio RoadRunners "claimed" the race.

From its inception until 2013, participants could sign up either for a dollar (\$1.00) donation or run the race free. Funds raised were used to cover race expenses and any remaining funds were donated to the San Antonio Zoo. One year a brick was purchased with these funds. The brick was to be placed in the Zoo on behalf of the Wednesday Night Zoo Runners. A cheetah was adopted two years in a row on behalf of the Wednesday Night Zoo Runners with the funds. Donations were also made to a fund established for a park ranger that had been killed in the park and to other funds that dealt with a runner or a situation close to the runners.

In 2013, the race became a free event with the San Antonio Roadrunners handling the expenses.

The race originally was held from the start of daylight savings time to the end of daylight savings. When the government changed the start/finish dates of daylight savings, the Wednesday Night Zoo Run's Season changed to the first Wednesday in April to the last Wednesday in October, unless that date fell on Halloween.

There has always been a social hour after each race with race participants bringing snacks and their preferred beverage. Steve Smith would bring ice cold watermelon for participants to enjoy after the race. At the end of the season, a buffet dinner is held with door prizes being distributed. The cost of the main course of the dinner was at first covered with funds donated by participants. Then, the San Antonio Roadrunners handled the expenses. Participants were asked to bring side dishes, desserts, and their personal beverage.

Volunteers for this event have always been needed especially prior to the park renovations. Since the renovations, the number of volunteers needed has decreased to only four. Unfortunately, there is no listing of the volunteers through the years. All the volunteers are runners and many, if not all, were members of the San Antonio Roadrunners. A few of the volunteers, and apologies to those not listed, include: John Cantu, lead bike; Jerry Negrete, Past President, San Antonio Roadrunners, lead bike; Mario Valencia; Sam Idrogo; Whitney Lawrence, Past President, San Antonio RoadRunners, and his dogs; Sally Seeker; Laura Guerrero; Greg Young; Bob Ratliff, Past President, San Antonio Roadrunners; Eydie Ratliff; Ed Madrigal; Julie Olsen; Robert Beyer, Lead Bike; Bert and Julia Hargesheimer; Tony and Sylvia Munoz; and others.

Other items of interest –

One year, the Brackenridge Eagle, the train that runs through the park, stopped blocking the path of the runners. However, that did not stop the Zoo Runners. Several lead runners jumped through the Eagle's cars.

In 2013, the run was held in memory of victims and survivors of the Boston Marathon bombing.

Also in 2013, a bench was purchased in memory of Walter Bobrukiewicz, a runner, active member of the San Antonio Roadrunners, and former director of the Wednesday Night Zoo Run. The bench is located across from the Lambert Softball Field near the area where pre-/post race activities take place.

During Steve Smith's tenure as director, the race was never cancelled. Steve has said that runners would show up regardless of the weather. During the 2017-2019 seasons, the event has been cancelled numerous times due to the weather. John DiCarlo and Sally Rios went to the park during these times since there was no real way of communicating the cancellation to all the runners. And, as Steve said, runners showed up. They were told the event had been cancelled and they could run at their own risk, which they did.

### ATTACHMENTS:

- 1991 Article from "Running Around in San Antonio, A Guide for Runners, Walkers, and Bicyclists," by Dennis M. Keating.
- 2013 Walter's Bench  
Picture of "Run for Boston" held April 17, 2013
- SARR Newsletter Articles – All articles written by Sally Rios
- 2006 It Was a Dark and Stormy Night  
A Season of Change
- 2010 New \$\$\$ Record for Wednesday Night Zoo Run
- 2012 Making New Friends but Keeping the Old
- 2013 All good things must come to an end...  
...But all good things had a beginning. History of Wednesday Night Zoo Runs, A Two-Mile Fun Run thru Brackenridge Park  
... We Ran – 2013 Wednesday Night Zoo Run
- 2014 Changing on the run, Recap of 2014 Wednesday Night Zoo Run
- 2019 Thanks for Joining Us on Global Running Day, June 5
- 2006 "2 Miles of Fun, Athletes keep a tradition in Brackenridge Park,"  
By Vincent T. Davis, Express-News Staff Writer
- 2007?? Copy of trails through Brackenridge Park that appeared in Express-News.
- 2016 Map of Zoo Run Route

**SOURCE:** "Running Around in San Antonio, A Guide for Runners, Walkers, and Bicyclists," by Dennis M. Keating. Published by Silver Cirque in San Antonio, Texas.

Permission to use excerpts from book granted by Mr. Keating to Sally Rios in 1991.

FYI: Credit is given to Ed Luke, SARR member for the Maps Design that appear in book.

### ZOO RUNS

These two mile runs which are enjoyed by a wide variety of runners, are held during the daylight savings time period from April to October. For FLEETIES, they offer a chance to test and perfect their short distance times. For beginning TRUDGIES, they present the opportunity to experience the excitement of a race in an informal laid back atmosphere. Held in Brackenridge Park on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m., registration is at the Joske's Pavillion. The Zoo Runs are organized by the San Antonio Track Club, with the \$1.00 entry fee going for the betterment of the San Antonio Zoo. Ribbons are presented to age group winners. After the races it is not uncommon for some of the runners to bring a picnic dinner. For information telephone [REDACTED]



Walter's Bench

From: San Antonio RoadRunners (sarios1949@att.net)

To: sarios1949@att.net

Date: Friday, July 5, 2013, 12:21 PM CDT

**DEDICATION OF BENCH IN MEMORY OF**

**WALTER BOBRUKIEWIEZ**

**July 10, 2013**

**Brackenridge Park  
Immediately Following  
SARR Wednesday Night Zoo Run  
Approximately 7:15 p.m.**

Bench dedication will take place near the sign-in table for the Wednesday Night Zoo Run. Walter's Bench will be located near this area. No formal ceremony; just a few words from a few close friends. It will be a BYOB/F (Bring your own beer/food) if you plan to stay to visit.

For those that did not know Walter, he was the husband of Joan Bobrukiewiez - SARR past president, past race director of the Turkey Trot, and coordinator of the Zoo Runs. Joan and Walter coordinated the Zoo Runs for several years and Walter was a big part of the running community. After his death, funds were collected to have a bench placed in the park in his memory.

Please share this information with others friends of Walter and Joan. Thanks!

Sally Rios  
Friend of Bobrukiewiez'  
Volunteer Coordinator  
HM: 210-735-8037  
CELL: 210-464-0029  
EMAIL: sarios1949@att.net

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**COMMEMORATIVE PARK BENCH**

**HONORING**

**WALTER BOBRUKIEWIEZ**

**DONATIONS ACCEPTED.**

Checks should be made payable to Brackenridge Park Conservancy,  
earmarked for bench for Walter Bobrukiewiez

P. O. Box 6311, San Antonio TX 78209

SARR has started the fundraising drive with a donation in order to raise \$2000 for a bench in memory of Walter Bobrukiewiez (bench photo below). We are asking for the bench to be placed near the sign up table for the Zoo Run. Walter and Joan were asked by Steve Smith (originator of the Zoo Run) to take the lead for the run in 1996. A friend suggested this bench as a great way to remember Walter.

The Brackenridge Park Conservancy through the San Antonio Parks Foundation has set up an account so that donations can be made by check and mailed to (Brackenridge Park Conservancy, PO Box 6311, San Antonio TX 78209, or credit card ([www.brackenridgepark.org](http://www.brackenridgepark.org)). The Conservancy is a 501(c)3 organization so donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Each donation must have the annotation that it is for the bench in Walter's name. Contributions are also being accepted at the Wednesday Night Zoo Run--cash or check made to BPC.

The goal is to reach the \$2000 sum by midsummer so that the bench and plaque can be ordered and installed before the end of the Zoo Run this year.



*The inscription will read  
"In memory of  
Walter Bobrukiewiez  
Run Well, Be Happy"*

If you have questions or comments regarding this drive, please email Joan at [jbnativetx@gmail.com](mailto:jbnativetx@gmail.com) or call 210-286-6291.





Wednesday Night Zoo Run  
"Run For Boston"  
April 17, 2013



# It Was A Dark and Stormy Night....

DRAFT

Well, it wasn't really that dark. And it wasn't that stormy. Okay, it wasn't night. It was 2:15 in the afternoon and threatening rain. It had been raining off and on all day. It was cloudy and humid. As I sat on Broadway waiting for the traffic light to change, I looked over and saw a three some playing golf. I thought, "Only golfers would be crazy enough to come out in this type of weather." Right about then, a male runner comes into view. Ok, so maybe only golfers and runners are crazy. The light changed and I headed over to Brackenridge Park for the end-of-season Zoo Run Party. Yep! It had been raining all day and the forecast was for more rain and storms all evening. The last Wednesday Night Zoo Run and party was still on! Only golfers and runners....

JOAN and WALTER BOBRUKIEWIEZ, who have been the backbone of the Zoo Runs, showed up with their pop-up tent, grill, sausage, fajita chicken, beer, water, and everything else that was needed for the evening meal. Everything was set up within ten minutes. So we sat, keeping an eye on the clouds and telling running stories. This was the 27<sup>th</sup> year of the Wednesday Night Zoo Run. Joan and Walter took over the helm after STEVEN SMITH stepped down. The run has been cancelled a few times but tonight was not one of them. Joan and Walter have been great! They have managed to have a two-mile course laid out all through the park construction. The course needed to be altered several times because of the construction but there was always a course. Once the new trails were complete, Walter crafted some wooden directional arrows to be placed in the ground to show the back-of-the-pack runners the direction of the race. Who knew Walter was so talented!! The Run went from needing approximately 8 - 10 course marshals to needing only four.

Joan and Walter started out the season, back in April, race directing it for the first two months. They continuously asked for volunteers to step forward to direct. The purpose of alternating directors is to allow everyone a chance to run the two mile course. You would think that during the hot months, people would be rushing to be directors. Not! Directing is not a difficult job. Just ask any of us that have done it. I generally take over July and August. This year SALLY SEEKER, BELEN GUTIERREZ, EDDIE MARTINEZ, and JERRY NEGRETE took a couple of months. As mentioned earlier, only four course marshals are needed. The consistent marshals were Joan, Jerry, WHITNEY LAWRENCE, MARIO VALENCIA, SAM IDROGO, and PAT RIODAN. Sam, Mario, and Pat have been so consistent over the years that this year their marshalling locations have been officially named for them. You have "Sam's Corner" located at Avenue B, "Mario's Way" located along Mulberry; and "Pat's Crossing" which is the iron bridge that the runners cross. Who knows, in a few year's there may be a "Whitney's Circle." Jerry, Pat, and Walter have done double and triple duty. They mark the course (we went back to flour), serve as marshals, and lead the race. This last one was always a challenge - could they make that sharp turn by the tree house? Could they stay in front of the lead runner? You bet they did!!

One more volunteer, EDIE RATLIFF. Although she does not run or walk, she joins us each Wednesday. As we all hustle off to our respective locations, it is Edie that stays behind to "guard" our table and all the race paraphernalia. Runners will occasionally leave car keys, glasses, and other personal items. Edie handles anything that comes up while we are gone including preparing any food items for after the run. Thanks, Edie! We appreciate your support.

One of the "firsts" that occurred this year was a female being the overall winner of one Wednesday night run. ANDREA JARZOMBEK can add that title to her portfolio. Andrea's goal was to break 10 minutes for the two-mile run. The closest she came was 10:15. She has won the women's category in several races this year - The Women's 5K; The Whine Run; The Symphony 5K. We were all cheering her on hoping she'd meet her goal. We appreciate your sense of humor and your running abilities, Andrea. We'll be cheering you on next year!

And then there is one of our youngest runners---CONRAD CARBAUGH. Every year there seems to be one young runner that wins the hearts of everyone. That's Conrad. This fifth grader has been a regular participant on Wednesday's. Conrad is under 11 years of age. When asked if he planned to participate in the Kids' Zoo Run, he responded, "No. It's too short." Conrad placed third in his age group (43:16) at the Labor Day Whine Run. Attendance at the Wednesday night run after Labor Day was low. Those adults in attendance were still whining about the hills and how sore their legs were. But not Conrad!!! Here he was ready to run. Conrad ran the last Wednesday night run in a little over 17 minutes. It's neat to see the adults that crossed the finish line before and after him exchanging hand shakes and "good run" with him. We'll be cheering you on also, Conrad.

The rains never came. The record was still intact. The end of year party had not been rained out!! About 75 runners showed up to run and eat. Many brought a side dish to go along with the sausage and chicken. It was like an early Thanksgiving - good food and great desserts. Now that I think about it, it was *the runners* Thanksgiving. Giving thanks for the ability to run, the friendships that had been formed, the remodeled park and pathways, and, of course, the weather. The Wednesday Night Zoo Run closed the 27<sup>th</sup> year by donating close to \$800 to the San Antonio Children's Zoo. Runners are asked to donate a dollar ~~donation~~ each Wednesday. The money is used to purchase finishers' ribbons, insect repellent, flour to mark, and items for the end-of-season party. *The council is very pleased for the run*

Thanks for a great season! The 28<sup>th</sup> year of the Wednesday Night Zoo Run will begin the first Wednesday (March 14, 2007) after daylight savings begins and continue until the Wednesday (October 31, 2007) before daylight savings ends. See you then!!

## A SEASON OF CHANGE

As the season changes from summer to autumn (although in San Antonio it still feels like summer), there is also a change in the running community. The obvious change is from having zero to one race per weekend to having two or more races on a weekend. Autumn seems to be the start of the fall racing season.

The not so obvious change is the change in the make up of the runners. No, I'm not talking about the color of eye shadow or the color of lipstick. I'm talking about the runners who participate in these events. I don't really know when the change started but I noticed at the runs that I have attended that there are a lot of new, unfamiliar faces. Now, I admit that I do not attend as many races as I used to, but I still sign up for some of the more popular ones. It used to be that you could almost predict who would be the overall winner and/or who would win certain age groups.

Some of the familiar runners have now become bikers. Some have switched to triathlons or train for events longer than a marathon. Others have become walkers. And, sadly, some have joined the Heavenly Chapter of SARR. The younger runners, the ones that were in the 14 and under group, are now away at college or are in the military. Boy, they grew up fast! I remember running a race besides Priscilla Ramirez so that her dad, Bobby, could catch up with his son, Charlie. It was not a planned thing. The three of them had started together but Charlie took off, and Bobby did not want either of them to run by themselves. So I told Bobby I'd stay with Priscilla. Now I tease Bobby about not being able to keep up with "the kids." Heck, neither can I!

The change is real obvious in the Wednesday Night Zoo Runs. New faces. Younger faces. Some not so young faces. Families. Track teams and their coaches. They are there with their younger ones, with their coach, to run for fun or for time. They cheer each other on. They use each other as a challenge to run faster. They congratulate each other on knocking off a second or two from the last week's time. The more experienced runners share their knowledge with the less experienced.

Just as the change of seasons is a welcome change, so is the change in runners. New faces mean new enthusiasm for the running community. It means continuity of the joy of running and, hopefully, a continuity of the SARR. Some of the new faces have already become active with the SARR. Ashley Rosilier co-race directs the Endurathon, attends the monthly meetings, and helps out at other SARR races. Gib Hafernik came to the club with an idea for a new race and new location—the Bird Lovers' 10K scheduled for February. Leonard Kalinowski, though not a "new" face, serves as SARR treasurer and has accepted the race directorship of the 10 miler and has added a 10K to it.

This is all to say that just as the seasons change with spring bringing new life, it is hoped that all these new faces in the running community will bring "new life" to the SARR -- new life that will continue the tradition of supporting the running community by offering quality races for fitness, fellowship, and fun.

Oct, 2006

# NEW \$\$\$ RECORD FOR WEDNESDAY NIGHT ZOO RUN

By Sally Rios

Another season of the Wednesday Night Zoo Run has come to an end. The "season" goes from the first Wednesday in April to the last Wednesday before Halloween in October. The two-mile Zoo Run is held each Wednesday at Brackenridge Park with pre-/post-race activities taking place across the river from the Joske's Pavilion. The race starts at 6:30 p.m.

Picture #8

This was the 33rd year of the Zoo Run. Started in 1977 by Steve Smith, this fun run continues to remain strong. Joan and Walter Bobrukiewiez took over the coordination of the Zoo Run when Steve stepped down in early 1996. Joan has continued as coordinator with a handful of devoted volunteers. As Joan said in her closing remarks at the last 2010 Zoo Run, the Wednesday Night Zoo Run does not belong to any one group or person. Although the majority of the volunteers are San Antonio RoadRunner (SARR) members, it is not an SARR event.

The \$1.00 donation that is requested of participants goes toward the purchase of ribbons which are given to the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishers in each age group both male and female. Additional expenses include cups, Gatorade, ice, and insect repellent. We used a lot of that last item this year!!!! There were so many mosquitos, and they were so big, that the finish line water

Picture #10

stop had to be relocated for a couple of runs.

The total amount collected this year was a record amount.....\$1,145. As has been done in previous years, the money was donated to the San Antonio Zoo. This year it will be used for the Zoo's Africa Live II. In the past, Zoo Run donations have gone to the Children's Zoo; the purchase of a brick, identified as the Wednesday Night Zoo Run, purchased when the Zoo was seeking funds for the Africa Live construction; and a Cheetah was adopted two years in a row.

Each year familiar faces return, some after a long absence, amazed that the Zoo Run is still going on for a \$1.00 donation. Although the course has had to be adjusted for park renovation or storm damage over the years, all but one run this year was 2 miles long. Each year new faces appear and then continue to return! September 1, 2010, had cross country teams from Trinity University, The University of Texas, Texas Lutheran, and UTSA join us. These teams used the Zoo Run as their first meet. Each coach recorded the finish times of their runners. The coaches then merged times to determine the finish order for these runners. Other teams that regularly attended were members of the cross-country teams of the University of the Incarnate Word, St. Anthony's High School, and Alamo Heights Middle and High School just to name a few. These



cross country teams really challenged our "seasoned" runners. Yet, some of our "seasoned" runners accepted the challenge with ease.

The following were acknowledged at the last Zoo Run in October:

Youngest Consistent Participant – Ariana Davidson.

Most Experienced Consistent Male: Sid Sablow. A copy of a 1977 SARR Newsletter revealed that Sid ran a 7:49 mile back then. Now in the 70-74 category, Sid is still running, motivating all of us.

Most Experienced Consistent Female: Julia "Mother Earth" Wilkerson. Through all of her aches and pains, she keeps running with a smile on her face. Mother Earth reminds us to be nice to Planet Earth by recycling.

The Baby Brigade – Runners of the Future: Sophia Evans; Lannie Hargisheimer, and Jude Guerrero. We watched these three grow before our eyes as their parents and grandparents pushed their baby joggers along the route.

Most Consistent Groups attending the Zoo Run: St. Anthony High School Cross Country Team; the Brac Pak; R.U.N; and the Guerrero Family – Gary, Letty, Laura, and Jude.

Picture #1



All Time Course Record: 9:47

2010 Course Record: 9:57 Set by Nate Carlson

Most Consistent 2010 Runner with the Fastest Time: Juan Perez of Incarnate Word. Juan and his team mate, Soloman, ran 10:01.

This article would not be complete without mentioning our faithful volunteers:

Lead Bikes - John Cantu and Jerry Negrete.

Course Marshals – Sally Seeker, Jim Holbach, Jim Yanaway, Whitney Lawrence, Mario Valencia, Sam Idrogo.

Finish Line Water Support – Diana Camero, Sylvia Munoz

Keeper of the Table: Edie Ratliff

Making announcements, starting the race, calling finish times, and announcing results: Me

Coordinator, Course set-up; Keeper of Supplies, etc.: Joan Bobrukiewiez

The Wednesday Night Zoo Run continues in 2011 with the first run being held on April 6. New and familiar faces are welcome. As mentioned at the beginning, the Wednesday Night Zoo Run does not belong to one group or person. It belongs to the people that run the two miles and those that volunteer. The faces may change from year to year but the run continues.

***See you on April 6, 2011!***

**For more information about this run and how you can volunteer, contact:  
Sally at [sarios1949@att.net](mailto:sarios1949@att.net) or Joan at [jbnativetx@gmail.com](mailto:jbnativetx@gmail.com).**

**Photos courtesy of Carlos Marin, RUN member.**

# MAKING NEW FRIENDS BUT KEEPING THE OLD.

## *Recap of the 2012 Wednesday Night Zoo Run Season*

by Sally Rios

There was a song that had the words "make new friends, but keep the old. One is silver; the other gold." That is what the 2012 Wednesday Night Zoo Run did this year.

Early this year, the San Antonio RoadRunners voted to make the Wednesday Night Zoo Run an official SARR event. After all, most if not all of the folks putting on the event were either current or past SARR officers. The Board also decided to eliminate the \$1.00 donation, making the Zoo Run a free event. It would still be held on Wednesday evenings at Brackenridge Park, starting at 6:30 p.m., from the first Wednesday in April to the last Wednesday before Halloween in October. It would remain a two-mile run through the park. Not wanting to leave the San Antonio Zoo "hanging," the Board voted to continue to make a donation to the Zoo at the end of the season.

The number of participants at the Zoo Run ranged from approximately 50 to 150. Participants included the St. Anthony's High School Track Team, members of the Brak Pak, Alamo Heights Middle School Cross Country Team, members of the SARR 5K and Half-Marathon Training Groups, the University of Incarnate Word's Cross Country Camp, Harlandale Cross-County Team, just to name a few. There were out-of-town visitors who were in San Antonio for business. And, of course, there were our regular in-town participants...too many to mention, plus I might miss someone.

There were also a lot of folks that were participating for the first time. "First timers" were there every Wednesday even at the last run of the season. All seemed to enjoy the event, took SARR info and race flyers, and will hopefully participate in some of the SARR races.

Although it was announced several times at the beginning of the season that the Zoo Run was now a free event, participants continued to donate money. These donations were accepted and a portion was added to other donations received toward a memorial bench for Walter Bobrukiewiez. The goal was to reach \$2,000 by the end of the season. With donations from Walter's friends and the Zoo Run donations, that goal was reached. The bench should be in place by next season's Zoo Run.

These runs could not be held without some hard working volunteers:

**JOAN BOBRUKIEWIEZ** - faithfully marked the course each week and handled the registration box, finisher's ribbons, and bug spray. Bug spray was especially appreciated after the rains and even on the last Wednesday.

**WHITNEY LAWRENCE** - Along with his two four-legged friends, *Sadie and Chance*, Whitney directed the runners around the "circle" on the route. Participants seem to know the dogs

but can't remember Whitney. We all anxiously awaited the birth of Sadie's puppies and were like excited aunts and uncles when Sadie and puppies (six of them) made their first visit.

**JOHN CANTU** - Our faithful lead bike. On a couple of occasions, John thought the lead runner would pass him but he was able to stay in front. As he approached the finish line, John would use a whistle to notify the finish line the winner was fast approaching.

**SAM IDROGO** and **MARIO VALENCIA** - These two guys have been volunteering at the Zoo Run for such a long time that their locations are named after them. There's "Sam's Corner," corner of Avenue B and Brackenridge and "Mario's Mile," the one mile mark along Mulberry.

**JERRY NEGRETE** - The SARR President. He fills in wherever he is needed. When the SARR beginning runners training group attended, Jerry assisted with the generator. When any of the volunteers notified us that they would not be in attendance, Jerry jumped right in marking the course, serving as lead bike, or as course marshal.

**SALLY SEEKER** - Sally #2, as she is affectionately called, assisted primarily as course marshal but also assisted with the distribution of ribbons, announcing the winners, and handling the pre-race announcements.

**EYDIE RATLIFF** - Eydie "held" our table for us while the race was being run. She handled any last minute sign-ups, giving directions as needed, guarded runners' car keys and other items, and collected donations.

Other volunteers that assisted as course marshals and/or helped pour water and Gatorade included **ADELITA CANTU**, **BERNICE SEPULVEDA**, **SYLVIA MUNOZ**, **RALPH** and **MEG DOMAS**, **KELLY** and **TIM MORRISON**, and **RICK HOPKINS**.

**SALLY #1**, that's me. I set up the finish line water and Gatorade, making announcements at the start, calling finishing times, as well as announcing the winners.

The all-time record for the two-mile Zoo Run, though not on the same course, is believed to be 9:47. The 2012 season had **NATHAN PINEDA** setting the season's record in a time of 10:04.

The 2013 Zoo Run season will begin on April 3, 2013. It is hoped that our "silver and gold" friends as well as new friends will join us.

2012 pg 2



# All good things must come to an end ...

Wednesday evening, Oct. 30, 2013, was the last Zoo Run coordinated by **Joan Bobrukiewicz** and led by **John Cantu**.

When Joan announced earlier this year that this would be her last Zoo Run season, I figured I'd better get some race history. For the history on the Zoo Run, see the "...But All Good Things Had A Beginning" article located elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Joan and her late husband, Walter, served as race directors of the Zoo Run starting the late 80s-early 90s and again in early 2000. After Walter's death, Joan continued to race direct with a little help from her friends. Joan has been the keeper of the funds, the registration box, the ribbons, and the all important flour.

She arrives around 4:30 p.m., sets out on bike or on foot, to mark the Zoo Run course with flour. She does such a good job that the birds eagerly await her "markings." The brown sparrows line up along the arrows, forming an arrow themselves, to eat the flour. They are considerate leaving enough flour for the runners to see.

She purchases the needed mosquito repellent for those Texas size mosquitos that show up in the summer. When award ribbons are needed, Joan orders them and assists in distributing the ribbons to the winners. When sign-up sheets are needed, Joan produces/copies them. When it was decided that all runners needed to sign a waiver, Joan attached a waiver to each sign-up sheet. She made the bean bags that are used to hold down race flyers. She serves as a course marshal as needed. When the park was renovated, Joan, Mario Valencia, and a few others set out to measure a new two-mile course through the park.

Read more about Joan and her memories in the "On the Run" article located elsewhere in this Newsletter.

"Have bike, will lead." That should be John Cantu's calling card. John is not only the lead bike for the majority of the San Antonio RoadRunner (SARR) events, but he has served as the lead bike for the Wednesday Night Zoo Run since the late 90s. John used to participate in these runs but a knee problems pushed him to the bike. His loss; our gain. A lead bike is always needed at the Zoo Run.

John, with a whistle around his neck, stays in front of the lead runner. Sometimes those runners really make him work! Fastest times: 2009 - 10:01; 2010 - 9:59; 2011 - 10:05; 2012 - 10:04; 2013 - 10:03. John stayed a head of all of them. With the last portion of the Zoo Run being an out 'n back, that whistle alerted runners to move to their right as the leader, and John, were on their way to the finish. The whistle also signaled the folks at the finish line to get ready.

John pedaled hard, in all sorts of weather, never slipping or falling. He is the first to acknowledge/appreciate the speed of the lead runner. Once the lead runner crosses the finish line, John helps direct runners to the finish.

Although they are stepping down from their Zoo Run duties, they will continue to be part of the running community and SARR. Joan will serve as the race director for the 2014 SARR Endurathon and John will be lead bike at the SARR races.

Thanks, Joan and John! We'll miss seeing you at the Zoo Run. Enjoy your free Wednesday evenings!

.... But all good things had a beginning.

## History of Wednesday Night Zoo Run, A Two-Mile Fun Run thru Brackenridge Park

This past Spring, **Joan Bobrukiewicz** announced that she would no longer be coordinating the Wednesday Night Zoo Run. When I heard this, I figured I'd better get some history of this event before Joan left. (See "All Good Things Must Come to an End..." article elsewhere in this Newsletter.)

The Wednesday Night Zoo Run, a two-mile fun run through Brackenridge Park, was started in approximately 1983 by **Steve Smith**. Steve, at one time, was the running columnist for the Express-News, directed several road races, and was a runner himself. The reason for creating the Zoo Run is unknown but it was probably to give the San Antonio running community an opportunity to get in some mid-week speed work along with some socializing with other runners.

In March, 1996, Steve contacted **Walter Bobrukiewicz** to ask him to take the Zoo Run over after Steve's father passed. Steve had inherited his dad's propane business and it would keep him too busy to race direct. Steve occasionally stopped by on Wednesday Nights. He still does, hoping to see some old familiar faces.

The Zoo Run has had several race directors besides Steve, Walter, and Joan. Several folks would assist during Steve's reign when he was unable to direct. During a period of transition, **Gloria Grohman** and **Tom Lake** each directed. Tom was the lucky one to be directing during the renovation of the park and 911. After re-routing the course several times through the park while the renovation took place, Tom got permission to have the race at Salado Park at Ft. Sam Houston. After 911, because of difficulty getting onto the base, the race was moved back to Brackenridge Park. The start/finish was on Avenue B near what is now the parking garage.

The venue has always been Brackenridge Park with the meet-up location being at Joske's Pavilion and now at the current site, across from the ball field nearest the Witte. The run has always started at 6:30 p.m. near the Hildebrand entrance. The finish line has moved as the park was renovated and the distance re-measured.

The San Antonio RoadRunners (SARR) officially "adopted" the Wednesday Night Zoo Run in 2012. Up until then it was just an "unofficial, unorganized" run put on by runners. Volunteers, all runners, have always assisted as race directors, course marshals, water stop personnel, etc. Sometimes it still feels like an "unofficial, unorganized" event.

The entry fee has always been a \$1.00 donation with money going to the San Antonio Zoo. In 2011, \$1,200 was collected. In return for the donations (donation of \$1,000 or more), there is a brick inside the Zoo that has "Wednesday Night Zoo Runners" on it and a cheetah was adopted

2013

two years in a row with funds from the Zoo Run. There have been exceptions to the Zoo donation. One year the donation was given to fund established for one of the Park Rangers who was killed in the park. There have been other exceptions, all dealing with runner or a situation that was close to the runners. With the adoption of the Zoo Run by the SARR, the \$1,000 donation was made optional. SARR stated that the Zoo would continue to receive a \$1,000 donation each year. At the end of the 2012 season, a donation of \$1,200 was made to the Zoo. This season, Wednesday Night Zoo Runners have contributed \$870. SARR will make up the difference getting the total up to \$1,000 for the Zoo.

The Zoo Run continues to draw runners, new and old. As Joan has said, this is probably one of the best kept secrets in town. Each summer, local running camps bring their runners out. One year about six senior universities brought their track teams for an "official" race. The details are too lengthy to go into, but each coach recorded their runners' times. The winners of that "race" were determined by the coaches comparing finishing times. St. Anthony High School track/cross country team is a consistent participant. The SARR training groups – 5K as well as half/whole marathon trainees – have joined the Zoo Runners. Runners from past years have returned to the city for meetings or to see family and stop by the park on Wednesday wondering if the Zoo Run is still going on. Participation ranges from 50 runners to 150+ runners.

Participants range in age from 9 and under to 80+. Ribbons are given to the top three finishers in each age group – five year increments – to both males and females. Runners proudly record "My first run!" "PR!" and "too hot!" The younger runners and first timers excitedly accept their ribbons, regardless of their time.

Times vary from 9:47, the fastest all-time run (year unknown), to 30+ minutes for the walkers. In 2012, **Nathan Pineda** had the fastest time, 10:04. 2013 had **Omar Trevino** completing the two miles in 10:03. **David Barlow** (2012), **Conrad Carbaugh** (2013), and **Julian Castano** (2013) have completed the course in 10:11.

The Zoo Run has always been a two-mile distance. It originally started the first Wednesday after daylight savings time began and continued until the Wednesday before daylight savings time ended. When the government changed the start/finish of daylight savings time, the start of the Zoo Run season changed to the first Wednesday in April and ends the last Wednesday in October *before* Halloween.

The Wednesday Night Zoo Run has never been cancelled although rain has presented some challenges. Construction in and around the park have also challenged the runners but they always seem to show.

So, join us on April 2, 2014, for the start of the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Wednesday Night Zoo Run. We'll "run" until October 29<sup>th</sup>.

Thanks to Joan Bobrukiewicz for assisting in putting this article together.

2013 pg 2

... We Ran

## 2013 Wednesday Night Zoo Run

April 3, 2013 – First Wednesday Night Zoo Run of the season.

Small crowd ... we ran

Rain, humid, heat, cold ... we ran

Boston Marathon bombing ... we ran

Celebrated return of two Boston Runners, safe and okay ... we ran

Honored young victim of Boston awarding ribbons only to those

14 and under ... we ran

Joined by SARR training groups –

5kers, half and full marathoners ... we ran

Mourned the death of runner at Beach to Bay ... we ran

Dedicated Walter's Bench ... we ran

Runner falls during run ... we ran

Fiesta, Easter ... we ran

Joined by running groups from area high schools –

St. Anthony, Alamo Heights, Incarnate Word ... we ran

Fastest 2 mile time this season: 10:03 ... we ran

Remembered 9-11 ... we ran

Joined by mothers with strollers ... we ran

Celebrated birthdays ... we ran

Celebrated PRs ... we ran

Thanked Joan Bobrukiewicz and John Cantu for their

assistance/contribution to Zoo Runs ... we ran

Oct. 30, 2013 – final run of season ... we ran

Then we partied!!!!



## CHANGING ON THE RUN Recap of 2014 Wednesday Night Zoo Run

The 2014 SARR Wednesday Night Zoo Run season came to a close on October 29 with the annual End-of-Season Pot Luck meal. This year's Zoo Run started and ended with changes.

To start off with, the event had a new coordinator. After many years of directing the Zoo Run, Joan Bobrukiewicz decided to step down. Accepting the challenge of taking the reins from Joan, was James Vavrina. James was also elected by the SARR membership as the new secretary to the SARR. Having come from Florida and being involved with a running club there, James was ready, willing, and able to handle the Zoo Run. James took over the duties of marking the course, starting the event, calling times at the finish, and handling the awards. His pronunciation of the Spanish names was a difficult at first but improved as the season progressed.

With James handling the start/finish line times and awards, Sally #1 (Rios) moved to being the course marshal at Mile 1. She continued to setup the sign-up table, with SARR and other race flyers, and provided the water and Gatorade.

The changes continued....because of medical concerns, Sam Idrogo was unable to continue as course marshal at the intersection of Brackenridge and Avenue B. Mario Valencia moved from course marshal at Mile 1 to "Sam's Corner." Then Michele Darling arrived with her bike, assisted as lead bike, and eventually took over as course marshal at Mile 1. This left Sally #1 to be a "floater," subbing where necessary and/or just preparing the cups at the finish line.

John Cantu, who had served as the lead bike for the Zoo Run for many years, also stepped down. Jerry Negrete, President of SARR, assumed the duties of lead bike as well as the duties of setting out the orange cones and "runner on the road" signs. He did all this driving from his home/work location in New Braunfels each Wednesday.

Other volunteers, who proved dedicated and flexible moving from one location to another were: Laura Guerrero; Sally #2 (Seeker); Whitney Lawrence and his critters; and the guardian of our table, Edie Ratliff. There were other volunteers that helped throughout the season, so many that it would take an extra page to list them. Our deepest thanks go out to all persons that helped during the season.

The participation in this year's Wednesday Night Zoo Run seemed to grow. Part of the growth was due to the SARR Training Team participating in the event at the beginning of the season. Several cross-country teams also came out - Incarnate Word, Holy Cross, Alamo Heights, and St. Anthony. Coach John "J.G." Gonzalez has brought his St. Anthony team to the Wednesday Night Zoo Run for as long as this writer can remember. Coach J.G. is retiring this year after 30 plus years at St. Anthony. One of the Coach's "products" is Gary Guerrero, a regular participant of the Zoo Run who generally finishes in the top three. Congratulations, Coach! Thanks for bringing your runners out each Wednesday!

October proved to be a Birthday Month. Birthday celebrations started out with Gary Guerrero's 40-something; then Sebastian Flores' 10<sup>th</sup>, and ended with Sid Sablow's 77<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. All three birthday celebrations were special but Sid's topped the list. His nephew printed special birthday shirts for the occasion and Sid paid for a clown who did balloon caricatures for the young and not-so-young runners. We all look forward to Sid's 78<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The end-of-season brought out the runners as usual. SARR provided the meat/chicken; Anthony from Kiobassa donated some sausage; Joe Sepulveda did the grilling; Bob Ratliff provided quail; and everyone else provided side dishes and desserts. I considered Sid's party as a practice run for the end-of-season party and the end-of-season party as a practice run for Thanksgiving! Thanks to all the provided food and helped setup/take down the party area.

No records were set this season. However, a few runners came close to breaking 10 minutes. There were no serious injuries although a few runners suffered heat problems in August. All recovered nicely.

The last change was that Sally #1 announced she would be stepping down from her Zoo Run responsibilities and asked for replacements. If three or four volunteers step forward, the work load will be a lot easier and volunteers may be able

to also participate. Volunteers are needed to assist with the sign-in area; coordinate the volunteers; and setup, take down the water/Gatorade. Contact Sally at [sarios1949@att.net](mailto:sarios1949@att.net) if you are interested in helping out and for more info.

The 2014 Zoo Run Season brought new leadership, new faces, some dance lessons, birthday parties, and new/renewed friendships. The 2015 Zoo Run Season runs from April 1 thru October 28, 2015.

So, see you April 1, 2015 — No Fooling!!!

2014pg2

**THANKS FOR JOINING US on Global Running Day, June 3**  
Sally Rios, Co-Director, Wednesday Zoo Run

On behalf of John DiCarlo and I, thank you to all the runners and vendors that joined us at the SARR Wednesday Night Zoo Run on June 5. With the threat of rain and Fleet Feet sponsoring a free 5k at Mission County Park, John and I had no idea how many, if any, runners would come to the Zoo Run. But, with apologies to "Field of Dreams," have it and they will come.

A total of 131 participants signed up. Add to that another 30 – 40 participants that did not sign up for ribbons. Students from Jefferson High School, Providence, and the River City Runners joined us. Other runners joined our "family" of Zoo Runners.

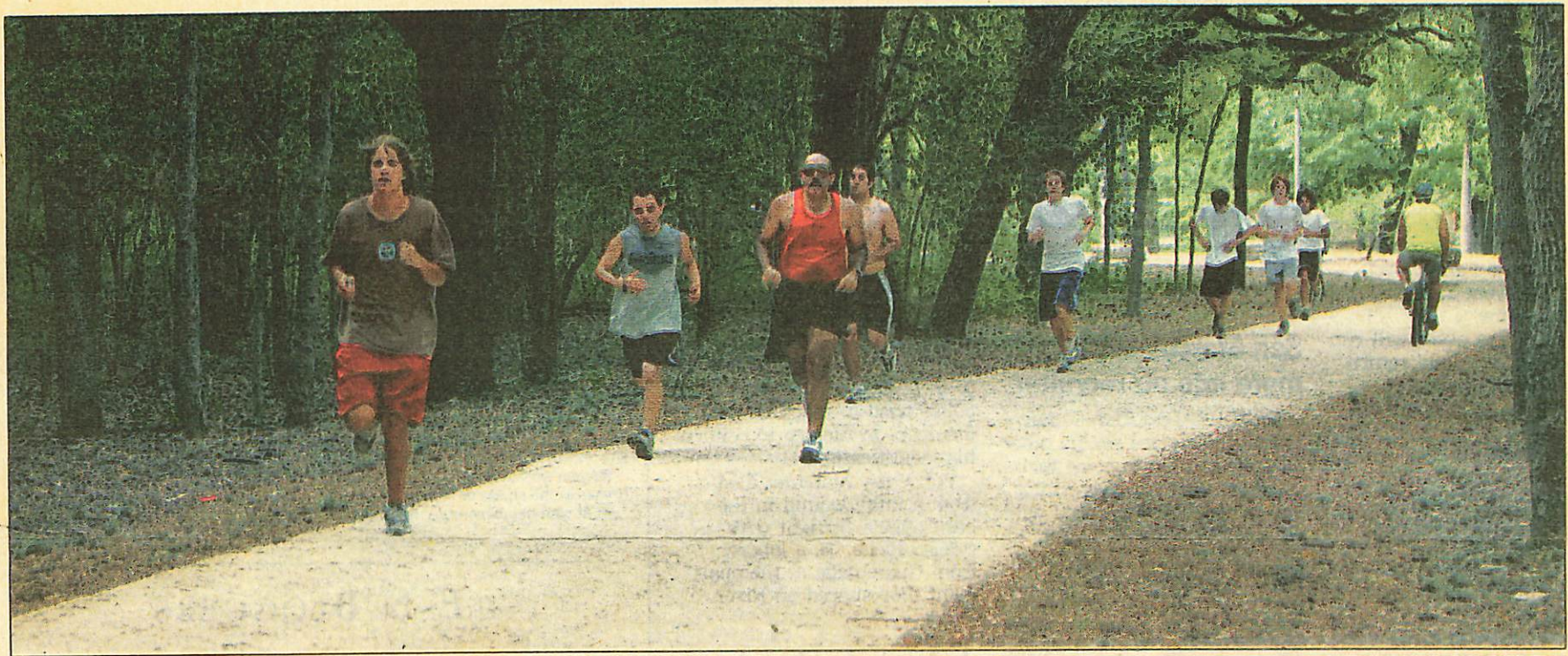
Representatives from Scallywompus, SA Running Company, Hurache Turbo, and the "Big Red and Barbacoa 5K" joined us. Drawings were held for miscellaneous door prizes including entries to races. Refreshments included beer, fried chicken, pizza, and assorted chips.

A big, big **THANK YOU** goes to **TONY GARCIA**. It was because of Tony that the vendors came out; door prizes were available; and beer and pizza were available. Chicken was donated by "Danger" and "Canoli;" and chips were donated by SARR training. As the group was told, if it wasn't for Tony, all the runners would have received would have been water and Gatorade!

So, thank you Tony, vendors, providers of refreshments, and most importantly participants. The Wednesday Zoo Run continues until October 30. Hope to see you at future Zoo Runs as well as Global Running Day 2020, the first Wednesday in June.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT ZOO RUN

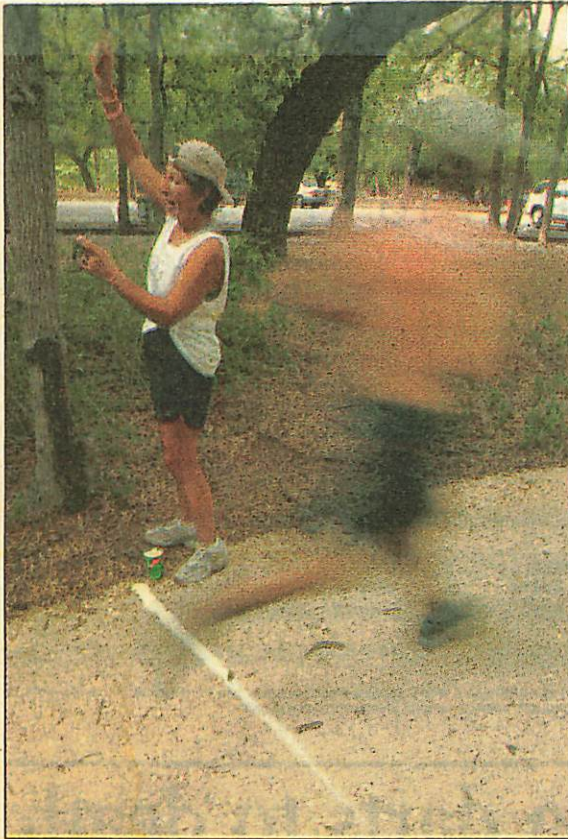
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PHOTOS BY WILLIAM LUTHER/STAFF

Runners go through Brackenridge Park during a recent Wednesday Night Zoo Run. The unofficial and unorganized event is held while daylight-saving time is in effect.





Sally Rios calls out finishing times during the run, which was started in 1984. The entry fee is a \$1 donation, with contributions going to the San Antonio Zoo.

# 2 MILES OF FUN

## Athletes keep a tradition in Brackenridge Park

BY VINCENT T. DAVIS  
EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITER

For years, the rhythm of runners' pounding feet has echoed along tree-lined paths at Brackenridge Park. They start outside the Parks and Recreation building at 950 E. Hildebrand — stretching, rubbing muscles, waiting for the signal to run.

Gilbert Hernandez gripped the handles of a three-wheeled baby stroller at that spot on a recent Wednesday, crouched and ready to run with 60 other participants. His wife, Peggy, her sister, Martie, and their three children braced themselves beside him.

"Runners!" shouted volunteer Sally Rios from the steps of the building. "Set, go!"

The family disappeared into the scattering crowd. Hernandez, 39, pushing the stroller beside his waddling 2-year-old daughter, fell to the back of the pack.

The Hernandezes have returned to the park after a three-year hiatus. The sisters ran with their father until he died. Now they're introducing the youngsters to a special society in which running rules and it's not a crime to draft on the speed of

the person in front of you.

"We're a family," Rios said. "We support each other and cry with each other when we have problems."

The Wednesday Night Zoo Run is a staple in San Antonio for people from all walks of life. Professionals, amateurs, high school track teams, old and young run the 2-mile course. Regulars who have moved out of town stop in while visiting relatives for a reminiscence run. The unofficial and unorganized race continues until daylight-saving time ends.

Steve Smith, a local race organizer and former running columnist for the San Antonio Express-News, started the race in 1984 to promote fitness and running.

"The idea was to have fun," said Smith, 60. "It was better to have something in the middle of the week and not feel like they had to perform at a high level unless they wanted."

Family obligations forced Smith to move on, but fellow runners wouldn't let the race die. Volunteers haven't changed what Smith started.

The entry fee remains a \$1 donation, with contri-

See MIDWEEK/8B

8-9-2006  
p92



# Midweek run offers fun, challenge

CONTINUED FROM 1B

butions going to the San Antonio Zoo.

Runners provide homemade dishes and beverages at the sign-up picnic table after each race. Participants sign up at 6:30 p.m.

First-, second- and third-place winners in four age categories receive a ribbon.

Challenges, besides finishing the route, abound for some runners. Some are recovering from illnesses; others have physical conditions they don't let limit their athletic pursuits.

Patrick Hernandez, 42, a deaf runner, focuses on his surroundings as he winds his way through the course. His biggest challenge was talking to his comrades. Since meeting Michael Shofner, 49, a runner who interprets for him, communicating isn't a problem.

The park's recent \$7.5 million renovation included reworking trails that runners welcomed after years of dodging traffic on the roads.

Four course marshals fan out along the route before the race. They welcome runners with clapping hands and shouts of "Good job, good job!"

A marshal waits at the finish line, yelling times as racers dash by.

At the halfway mark a week earlier, Joan Bobrukiewicz, 57, pointed half a dozen runners to the last leg of the course.

"George, this is the corner you've been looking for!" she yelled to a man. "This is your corner, you're done!"

"Thank you, Joan," the huffing man said, turning toward the finish line.

Then came Julia Wilkerson, 74, a trim woman the regulars call the "matriarch of the rac-

ing community."

"She's the Energizer Bunny," Bobrukiewicz said. "She doesn't quit."

Wilkerson started running at 50 to lose weight. Six months later, she ran her first marathon.

Dave DeWall, 62, has run in the park since 1985. He and his cronies ran 5K races on weekends to increase their speed for

the midweek run.

The last stragglers appeared. "I got a cold drop of water here," DeWall said, smiling at an approaching runner. "You can swallow it or I can throw it in your face."

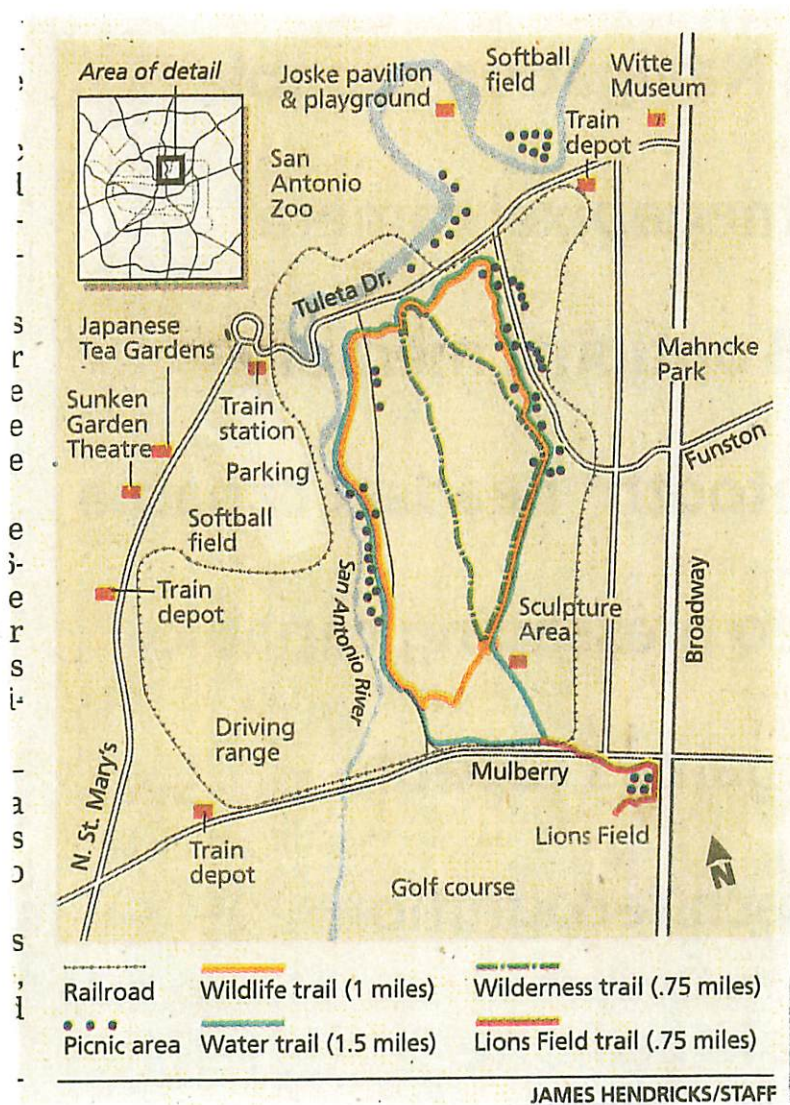
The runner chose the latter. DeWall splashed it in his face as he circled the last bend.

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8-9-2006  
pg 3



NOTE: Brackenridge Park was renovated between 2004 – 2006. The information listed in *Running in San Antonio* has changed slightly. The park now has traffic free trails. A copy of the revised trails, that was published by the San Antonio *Express-News*, is shown below.



2016 to Present  
Route

Google Maps Brackenridge Park

