

Don't pig out over holidays

By Bill Shaw

The Facts

Published October 29, 2007

Congratulations to Michelle Parrish and the Recreation Center-Lake

Jackson crew and volunteers for a great Monster Dash 5K on Saturday. I don't know how they worked it, but the weather was perfect.

The Monster Dash marks the end of

the fall racing season, a time when some runners slack off a bit unless they are training for January's Houston Marathon.

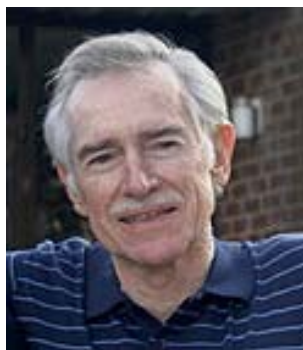
The beginning of November marks the start of the great American "party pig-out" that lasts through Dec. 31 when those who abandon their exercise regimens put on a few pounds.

"The countdown has begun," writes Kathleen M. Zelman, registered dietician on webmd.com.

"The clock is ticking, and ... New Year's Day will be here and so will all those annual lose-weight resolutions. ... Each year, many people just keep adding a few extra pounds until one day they wake up significantly overweight."

"So what's the harm in a little holiday weight gain,

especially if it's just a pound?" asks Susan G. Rabin, also on web.com. "According to researchers at the National Institutes of Health, most Americans never lose the weight they gain during the winter holidays. The pounds add up year after year, making holiday weight gain an important factor in adult obesity."



Holidays, then, can be hazardous to your health and put you on the path to obesity.

I'm not a big party person, but I do go to some parties and face the temptation of holiday treats. However, I stay in training

because I have short- and long-term goals. When I used to run the Houston Marathon in January, I trained intensely in November and December, heading out for long runs of 20 to 25 miles on Sundays. I am not running the Houston Marathon in 2008, but I plan to run the Spectacle Spectacular 5K on Jan. 26. I'm swimming and cycling because I plan to journey to Athens (Texas, not Greece) for my first 2008 triathlon in March.

To check on how I have done over the past 20 years during the holidays, I looked back at my 1987, 1992, 1997 and 2002 running logs. In 1987, I trained for my third Houston Marathon. On Oct. 29, I weighed 151; on Dec. 31, I weighed 151. In 1992, I weighed 148 on Oct. 29 and 152 on Dec. 31. (I missed the

Houston marathon training due to leg surgery.) In 2002, I trained for triathlons. On Oct. 28, I weighed 155, and on Dec. 31 (whoops!), I weighed 156 (too many cookies). In October 2006, I weighed 156. I kept on that extra pound, so you see how the weight can creep on us. I also was recovering from a hamstring injury and not training as hard as usual.

On Oct. 26, a few days ago, I weighed 157; that darned hamstring injury and extra pounds will not go away. Like Boxer in Orwell's "Animal Farm," I will try harder.

What will it be for you as the festival of overindulgence begins, those extra pounds or prudence and an exercise regimen that keeps those pounds off?

Don't make yourself a target for the flurry of ads in the New Year's papers for exercise machines and discounts at physical fitness centers. Stay with your exercise regime, whatever it might be. Practice prudence in partying and celebrate the new year without those extra pounds.

Footnote: The Brazosport Area Road Runners Association invites runners to meet on the beach side of the Surfside Bridge at 5:30 a.m. Nov. 10, for a bridge and beach run and breakfast tacos at the jetty park at 9 a.m. R.S.V.P. by Nov. 8 to [runwriter\(at\)sbcglobal.net](mailto:runwriter(at)sbcglobal.net).

Bill Shaw's running column appears in *The Facts* every other Monday.