

Run to the stores

By Bill Shaw

The Facts

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Though I had an ample Thanksgiving dinner with my family and snacked Thanksgiving night on two pieces of my mother's homemade pecan pie, I still weigh 157, exactly what I weighed four weeks ago when I warned my readers about the predicted American weight gains of 5 to 15 pounds over the holidays.

To burn those pie calories, however, I headed out Friday a beautiful 8 a.m. for a 5.5-miler around the Old Brazos. I didn't see the walkers and joggers I usually see. Maybe they were out earlier or off to the stores to Christmas shopping.

About three and a half miles into my run, I started this column in my head. I knew already what I was going to write about. After Thanksgiving I write my annual "what-to-give-the-runner-on-your-shopping-list-for-Christmas" column.

If your runner is not a member of the Brazosport Area Road Runners Association, or BARRA, you can sign him or her up for \$10; you can sign the whole family up for \$12. Membership fees go up, respectively, to \$15 and \$17 after Jan. 31. BARRA offers support, annual awards, encouragement, group runs and help with developing a physical fitness

program. If your runner is already a member, renew his membership. Brochures and membership forms are available at the Lake Jackson and Freeport recreation centers or go to www.barrahome.net.

Each year I also recommend subscriptions to *Inside Texas Running* and *Runner Triathlete News*. *ITR* has complete Texas running and walking contest schedules. *RTN* covers cycling, running, swimming, triathloning and multi-sport events, and each month publishes schedules of events in

Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. A gift subscription to *ITR* is \$15; a gift subscription to *RTN* is \$18. Subscribe online at www.INSIDETexasRunning.com or www.RunnerTriathleteNews.com or write for information on either or both at P.O. Box 19909, Houston, TX 77224.

A running log is as essential to a runner as a good watch. My favorite is Marty Jerome's *The Complete Runner's Day-by-Day Log and Calendar* (\$14.95). I like Jerome's log because of the monthly essays, ample room to record runs, distances, routes, cumulative mileage and comments, a bar graph to record weekly mileage, a "Record of Races" page and other features.

I think all runners enjoy and appreciate Jeff Galloway's practical and sensible approach and schedules to running and training for contests from 5Ks to marathons. *Galloway's Book on*

Running, second edition (Shelter Press, 2002, \$15.95) covers starting a program, racing, food, injuries, fine-tuning running and a host of other topics. I think it's the best on the market and an essential for every runner's book shelf.

A practical gift for a runner is a handteen, a 14-ounce plastic water bottle with a handle. If you ever see me running, you will see a handteen in my right hand. In the heat or the cold, water is essential to a runner. A handteen is \$4 and available from Rainbow Racing System. See www.rainbowracing.com or call (800) 962-1011.

Many runners are out in the early morning or evening dark for their runs. Drivers sometimes pay little attention to runners in the dark of the morning or evening. I never run in the dark without a reflector vest. Vests are available for \$20 or less. Some runners prefer a battery-powered blinking red light to strap onto the waist or arm. Prices range from \$15 to \$30. Consider a headlamp for runners who frequent dark and potentially dangerous terrain. Prices range from \$20 to \$30.

So much to recommend, so little column space.

Shop locally, of course, but if you can't find runner specialty items, check out www.roadrunnersports.com for a multitude of items.

Shoppers on your mark, get set, go!

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

