

West Columbia couple dominates

By Bill Shaw

The Facts

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FREEPORT — The Parkers of West Columbia, Grant and Wendy, took large leads and held them on the challenging hills of the levee and over the Velasco Bridge and back, and finished first overall in the male and female competition in the annual Freeport Flapjack 5K.

The Flapjack 5K began in downtown Freeport, winded onto Brazos Street parallel to the Old Brazos River, snaked onto Second Street and over the Velasco Bridge, looped around the Freeport Service Center then back over the Velasco Bridge onto Second Street for the home stretch and finished by the fountain on Park Street.

Grant Parker, 25, surged to the front of the pack from the start and never looked back.

“Basically I started off pretty much by myself and stayed by myself the whole race,” Parker said. “I didn’t have any idea where anyone else was. The bridge is never fun, but I knew it was there, and the wind was not a factor coming in; I knew what to expect there too.”

Runners faced a 5- to 10-mph headwind in the last mile of the out-and-back course.

Parker finished the 3.1-mile course in 18:37, a 6-minute mile pace. He finished second in the contest last year with a slower 18:48. In Saturday’s contest, he



Flapjack 5K winners, from left to right, Grant Parker, first overall male; Wendy Parker, first overall female; Kevin Regis, second overall male; Monica Montes, second overall female; Bobby Wilson, third overall male; and Cindy Sosa, third overall female. Photo by Bill Shaw.

finished 1:21 off the 17:16 male contest record set by Bryan Kerr of Brazoswood in 2000.

The second-place finisher, Kevin Regis, 47, of Lake Jackson finished in 19:02 and trailed Parker by 25 seconds.

“He was 60 or so yards ahead of me in the last mile,” Regis said. “It seems like I closed in a little in that third mile.” Close on the heels of Regis, third-place finisher Bobby Wilson, 27, of Lake Jackson crossed the finish line just four seconds behind Regis in 19:06. Wilson led Regis in the first mile but lost his lead on the levees along the Old Brazos.

“I lost some time in the second mile; it always seems the

hardest for me,” Wilson said. “I stayed on his heels in the third mile, but at the 3-mile mark, he pretty much lost me. He kicked and took off from me. I didn’t think the bridge was too bad; it didn’t hurt me as much as I thought it would.”

Wendy Parker, 29, finished ninth overall in the pack of 86 and first in the overall female competition in 21:25, a 6:54 race pace. She, like Grant, finished second last year in a faster 20:52. However, she finished 1:57 ahead of the second female finisher, Monica Montes, 42, of Houston who finished in 23:22. Parker finished 2:32 more than the 18:53 contest record posted by Melissa Hurta of Jones

Creek in 2000.

“I wasn’t that far behind her, about a half mile in the first mile,” said Montes. “I didn’t think I was going to catch her; she’s a good runner. I was slowed down some by the bridge.”

Montes’ friend and running companion, Cindy Sosa, 52, finished 17th overall and third in the female competition in 24:09, 47 seconds behind Montes.

“This is way off my 5K time; I haven’t done a 5K for about a year because of an injury,” Sosa said. “This is a ‘let’s-see-where-I-am run.’ Monica is always ahead of me. If I can keep her in sight in a race, I know I’m doing well.”

In addition to receiving trophies for their top finishes, the runners also received a pound of boiled shrimp in a Freeport Main Street Project pocket cooler. The top three male and female finishers in age group brackets from 12 and younger to 70 and older also received the shrimp furnished by B&B Seafood, Windswept, Captain Mark’s, On



Marilyn Koons and Roger Newcom of Alvin and Orville Kremmer of Lake Jackson enjoy pancakes after the Flapjack 5K. Photo by Bill Shaw.

the River Restaurant and Po Boy’s Seafood. Sandra Barbree cooked the shrimp and prepared pancakes and sausage for all the participants at the end of the race.

Freeport Main Street Project stages the contest as part of the annual Freeport Riverfest, and the Brazosport Area Road Runners Association (BARRA) Veolia Water, Waste Management

and BASF are major supporters. BASF funds the special non-competitive Kids Run for children 12 and younger before the main event. Youngsters in the Kids Run receive T-shirts and finishers medals.

“We thank everyone for coming out,” said Mary Stotler, Main Street director. “I’m glad the weather cooperated, and I really appreciate all the volunteers. We had great support from the city, the police and the mayor, Jim Phillips. I appreciate that everyone, runners and volunteers, comes out with such a great attitude. The runners are patient with us on the results. We’re learning a little bit more every year about how to stage the contest.”

Complete overall results and age-group finishers are available on the BARRA Web site www.barrahome.net.

