

## Running like poetry in motion

By Bill Shaw

*The Facts*

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I started on this column about 31½ miles into a 6.2-miler Wednesday morning as I ran up the north levee of the Old Brazos River. T.S. Eliot's opening words from "The Waste Land" crossed my mind. He said, "April is the cruelest month."

I have never found April "cruel." This April has been particularly full but not cruel. Swift on the heels of the Galveston Lonestar Sprint Triathlon on March 29 followed the Gator Gallop on April 5, the Run for Jesus on April 12, our Brazosport Area Road Runners Association March social on April 19 and this weekend the Flapjack 5K.

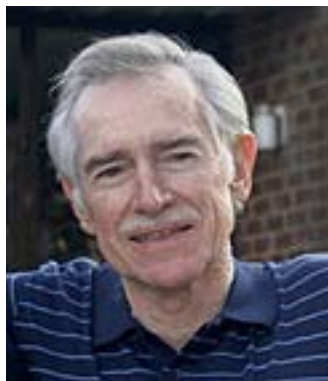
While some of us lost our way on the Run for Jesus course, we were found and put on the straight and narrow as several BARRA members traveled to Groveton to finish the Davy Crockett Bear Chase Marathon and Half Marathon.

Sue Wheeler, 47, and Greg Gray, 35, went the 26.2-mile marathon distance. Wheeler finished 11th overall and was the fourth female across the line in 3:34:59. Gray finished 15th overall in 3:54:58.

By the way, in my April 14 column, I reported Greg finished

the Galveston Lonestar Quarter Ironman Triathlon in 3:52:38; I mistyped. He finished in 2:52:38. Sorry, Greg.

Edwin Quarles, a BARRA member who moved to Lufkin, finished the Bear Chase Half Marathon, 13.1 miles, in 1:44:45, 23rd overall. Three Lake Jackson BARRA members also finished the half marathon. Kelly Colosimo, 42, finished 27th



overall in 1:45:38. Susan Lorms, 61, finished 97th overall and first in her age division; Ralph Corry, 59, finished 43rd overall in 1:44:45.

With all these running activities, I have neglected to remind my readers that April is Poetry Month, sponsored by the Academy of American Poets. For a number of years I have sung the praises of poetry in an April column, and this is the last opportunity I have.

I've used the English poet William Wordsworth's definition of poetry frequently because it seems appropriate to "born-again runners" who have tossed aside the headphones and music to listen to and to enjoy the poetry of the world around us, whether it be a dreary, rainy day or the perfect day for a run.

"Poetry," said Wordsworth in the 1802 preface to "Lyrical Ballads," on which he collaborated with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "is the spontaneous

overflow of powerful feelings recollected in tranquility."

In my running solitude, I feel, not all of the time, but most of the time, "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" that put me in touch with the profundity of the world around me. This profundity is poetry without words, rhyme or reason, pure poetry of a runner at one with the power infused within everything around us, a true runner's high.

"All things come from One," said C.S. Lewis in "Miracles." "All things are related — related in different and complicated ways."

I never could run on a treadmill bounded by four walls with a television set blaring CNN. I must be outside to feel that One, to get that runner's high.

The poetry of a runner's high is like what Wordsworth describes in "Tintern Abbey": "elevated thoughts, a sense sublime? Of something far more deeply interfused,? ... in the mind of man: ? A motion and a spirit, that impels ? All thinking things, all objects of all thought, ? and rolls through all things" (95-96, 99-103).

Those "elevated thoughts" that "sense sublime" is poetry in motion whether you are a swift, elite runner or a slow slogger like me.

Wrap up April, poetry month, by reading a poem or two or three or finding your own poetry in a solitary run.

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