

## Triathletes stormed into area

By Bill Shaw

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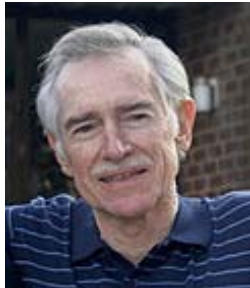
Hurricane Ike drove me north; I crunched out this column at the Comfort Suites in south Houston near Reliant Stadium with my wife, my mother and the complete novels of Jane Austen. We were without electricity, water, sewer and phone service Friday night and most of Saturday. The power surged back on in the late afternoon to enable me to write this column and e-mail it to *The Facts* for today.

Congratulations to the 68 teams and 13 individual triathletes, 11 males and two females, who finished the 26th annual Brazosport Relay Triathlon. Thanks to the Lake Jackson Recreation Center and the City of Lake Jackson for hosting the contest. And thanks to this year's sponsors: the city of Lake Jackson, BASF, Brazosport Regional Health System, Mike Sittner, BEARCOM, Coco-Cola Enterprises, Brazosport Area Road Runners Association, state Rep. Dennis Bonnen, The Proposed "After 5 Rotary Club," Constable Robin Rape of Precinct 1, Po-Boy's Seafood Angleton, Ward Chiropractic Center and The Gym24.

The event drew record numbers since it moved to the recreation center from Clute in 1999 — 15 more teams and five more individual participants than last year.

The average age of the

participants was 35. The median age was 32. In an era of youth obesity, I was excited to see the number of youngsters who turned out for the contest. The youngsters had the active support of their parents and peers. In several instances, families competed as teams. Swimmers, runners and cyclists 19 and younger made up 16 percent of the contest finishers.



Cassidy Vavra (21:42), 9, and Jacob Albers (26:14), 10, were the youngest swimmers. Megan Heydrick (38:38), Alex Seymour (32:58) and Samuel Sheldon (29:27), all 9, were the youngest runners.

Audrey Colgrove (1:20:47), 10, and Dylan Traweek (55:53), 11, were the youngest cyclists.

The older and so-called over-the-hill gang made a good, impressive showing as well, with the 50-plus group making up 18 percent of the finishers. The oldest swimmer, Cliff Wilson, 73, finished in 25:37 and swam faster than 11 of the 82 swimmers, some one-third his age. Bruce Meyers, 62, finished the swim 25 seconds faster than Wilson in 25:12.

Barbara Crews, 61, and Betty Massey, 60, finished their 5K runs, respectively, in 29:25 and 29:21. Crews ran a 9:29-mile pace, Massey a 9:28-mile pace. Senior citizens James Smith, 61, and Lake Jackson Mayor Bob Sipple, 66, ran run routes, respectively, in 27:32 and 33:02, for mile splits of 8:53 and 10:39.

On the threshold of 60, local cyclist Ruben Solis, 59, outpedaled the 81 cyclists and finished the 15-mile route in 34:01, an average of 26.5 mph. Ann

Anderson, 63, finished in 1:00:04, 15 mph. Jerry Shaffer, 61, finished in 50:06, 18 mph, and I, the oldest cyclist at 69, finished the route in 58:15, 71st out of 81 at 15.5 mph.

Impressively, Abigail Artley, 32, of Lake Jackson, finished first in record-breaking time in the individual female competition in 1:52:09 between the 19th and 20th overall teams. She broke the previous record by 46 seconds. Encouraged by Artley, co-worker and friend Celia Castillo, 37, finished her first-ever individual triathlon in 2:49:58 for second in the overall female competition.

David Slingerland, formerly of Lake Jackson, finished all legs of the race faster than eight of the teams to capture first place in the overall male competition in 1:39:02.

His closest competitor, Michael Tarabay of Lake Jackson, finished faster than nine other teams in 1:40:06. Third-place individual male finisher Troy Latiolais of Freeport finished faster than 16 teams in 1:49:04.

This year's contest benefited the Brazoria County Association for Citizens for Handicaps (BACH). John Farone, co-race director, estimated the event raised at least \$3,000 for the organization. Complete race results with individual and team times are available on [www.brazosportrelaytriathlon.org](http://www.brazosportrelaytriathlon.org).

With the remnants of Ike headed north, I hope we all find our homes safe as we head south.

**Bill Shaw's running column appears in *The Facts* every other Monday. He can be contacted by e-mail at [runwriter@sbcglobal.net](mailto:runwriter@sbcglobal.net).**