

What to buy for those on the run

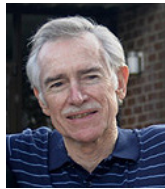
By Bill Shaw

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I hear scratching in the background, a pen on paper, chuckles, light laughter and belly laughs. “Ummm,” “maybe” and “no way.” Some jolly old elf out there and his associates are making a list and checking it twice. They know who’s been nice, naughty and downright intolerable. Many of Santa’s elves are searching for Christmas gifts for their favorite runners. It’s time, then, for the annual Christmas gift recommendation list for runners.

If you have not been hit by economic problems, and your runner has been a paragon of virtue, the perfect gift is a Garmin running watch ranging from \$129.99 to \$369.99. The basic Garmin, the 201, has a GPS that tracks and stores the miles, maps the routes, records elevation and mile paces throughout a run and indicates overall mile pace, calories and maximum pace in the run. It also allows the runner to create a “virtual partner,” along with other features that technically challenged runners never learn to use. It stores 5,000 runs, and all the data can be downloaded to special Garmin software for analysis and comparison on a computer. More expensive models include more features, including heart monitors.



Check local stores or Google Garmin.

Need to be more reasonable with your Christmas gift budget? Every serious runner should have a running log. My favorite is “The Complete Runner’s Day-by-Day Log” by Marty Jerome for \$12.99, in its 32nd year. Jerome includes monthly essays, photographs, quotations, running tips, a cumulative bar graph to log weekly mileage, a record of races page and other features.

If your runner joined the Lake Jackson/Freeport Area Triathletes and is resolved to become a multi-sport athlete, he or she needs “The Triathlete’s Training Diary for Dummies” by Allen St. John (www.dummies.com) for \$12.99. Check out the local bookstores or www.amazon.com for a list of other logs, including one specifically for women, most under \$25.

Every runner needs a magazine focused on his or her level and sphere of interest and competition. Published in Houston, Inside Texas Running provides a variety of articles, lots of photos from and articles on Texas racing, and complete regional schedules of events throughout Texas, with specific notes on the contests that also focus on walking. It is difficult to find ITR at local bookstores, so check the Web site www.INSIDETexasRunning.com for gift subscription information.

Runner Triathlete News, ITR’s sister publication, covers running, swimming, cycling and triathlons in a five-state area — Arkansas, Louisiana, New

Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. Calendars include detailed event information and online registration addresses. For subscription rates and gift subscription information, see www.RunnerTriathleteNews.com.

Runner’s World covers running nationally and internationally. The January issue is already on bookstore shelves with a rush order holiday subscription card for a special \$12 rate. If you know a subscriber, ask him to tear out the card and give it to you. A free training log comes with the rush order holiday subscription deal. The reverse side of the card offers a 2010 Runner’s World Calendar for \$15.95.

The Brazosport Area Road Runners Association, as well as Lake Jackson/Freeport Area Triathletes provides support, activities and camaraderie for runners young and old and an annual competition for Runners of the Year based on competition in area races. A downloadable membership form is on www.barrahome.net. Club membership is \$10 for individuals and \$12 for families through Jan. 31.

With shorter days, the early morning and late afternoon runners need a good reflector vest for safety and protection against cell-phone addicts and careless drivers.

So much to shop for, so little time. Only 18 shopping days until Christmas. Put on your shopping shoes or grab that mouse.

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

