

A look back at past '09 record-breakers

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Happy New Year! Welcome to a new decade.

I didn't have black-eyed peas Friday, but I did follow a personal tradition I've practiced for more than 20 years. Rain or shine, I head out for a run on Jan. 1. I slogged through a slow 3-miler Friday fighting 26 mph gusts of wind and a 36-degree wind chill.

January is named for the Roman god Janus, a two-faced god looking back to the past and forward to the future. It is appropriate, then, to look back at the record-breakers of 2009 and forward to January 2010.

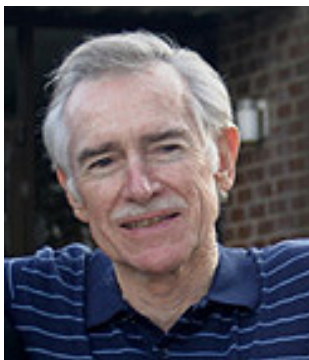
Before Brazoswood High School runner Lauren Smith headed west to the University of Arizona, she broke four of the local race records. She finished the Spectacle Spectacular 5K (3.1 miles) in 17:31, 2:04 faster than the previous record, a 5:39-mile pace. Breaking her own 2007 record by 41 seconds, Smith finished the Gator Gallop 5K in 17:51, a 5:45-mile pace.

Smith posted her third consecutive Firecracker 4 win and broke the record she set last year by 27 seconds in 23:23, a 5:51 pace in the 4-miler.

Smith won her fourth consecutive Mosquito Chase in 18:18, a 5:54 pace, but fell 14 sec-

onds short of the contest record she posted in 2007. Smith posted the Gator Gallop 1-mile record, 5:25, in 2008. She also set the record in the Monster Dash 5K, 17:43 in 2005. She holds six of the 12 active local race records.

Houstonian Luis Armenteros finished the Spectacle Spectacular 10K (6.2 miles) in 31:45, a 5:07 pace, to break the contest record he posted last year by 20 seconds. Sesar Figueroa romped the 4-mile Firecracker 4 race route in 20:28, a



5:07-mile pace, and broke the record set in 1996 by nine seconds. In the Mosquito Chase 5K, he buzzed around the Clute in 15:03, a 4:51 race pace, and smashed the previous record of 16:07 set in 2003 by 1:04.

Susie Walters of Wallis, whose husband Wayne was reared in Brazosport, finished the Spectacle Spectacular 10K in record time, 40:27, 2:33 faster than any female finisher. Since Walters is older than 40, her overall mark also stands as the female masters record. Walters now owns the contest's overall female record, 40:30, she established in 2004 before she became a masters runner, and the female masters contest record, which is three seconds faster than her overall female record.

Walters posted the 1:35:58 female masters record in the Surfside Half Marathon in 2006. She also holds the female

masters records in the Race for the Cure 5K (19:58), the Firecracker 4 (25:31) and the Mosquito Chase 5K (19:54), for a total of five local records.

Abbie Artley of Lake Jackson and Stewart Crouch of Angleton also broke records in 2009. Artley finished the Family Fitness 5K in 19:56, a 6:26 pace, and broke her previous record by 51 seconds. Crouch finished first in the Monster Dash male master competition in 18:26, a 5:56 race pace, and broke the previous masters record by 32 seconds.

Stephen Milford of Seabrook finished the Summertime Blues Sprint Triathlon in record time with a 500-yard, open-water swim, a 15-mile cycle route and a 3-mile romp around Old River, with transitions, in 1:03:45, 40 seconds faster than the previous record.

Richard Cairns of Katy finished second overall behind Milford in 1:06:38 and broke the previous male masters record by 2:43.

The local winter running season begins with the Surfside Shuffle 5K/10K Jan. 23. See www.ljfat.com for a downloadable registration form. The Angleton Spectacle Spectacular 5K/10K follows Jan. 30; entry forms will be posted on www.barrahome.net later this week.

Again, Happy New Year, train safely and prudently and good luck to all in your 2010 road racing.

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

