

Where have some of these runners gone?



Over the some 33 years that I've either run in a road race or covered one for either the Star-Telegram or this website, I have known many participants. Many are still among the weekend "warriors." And then there are some who just quit showing up, leaving me to wonder what happened to them...injury, aged and didn't want to run anymore, moved? Maybe you have wondered, too. I mean if you see someone at least a couple of times a week and then suddenly don't see or hear about them, you can't help but wonder.

So, with that in mind, here are some runners who I've not seen recently or in several years and I have no idea what happened to them. Some might not even be with us anymore. Maybe you know and let me know.

Note: I wrote about Jim Engstrom below. Since the, Spareribs LaMothe has reached out and found him. Jim says he has quit racing, but not running. He said he usually runs on the new trail at Marine Creek or the Boswell High School Cross Country course. He also works on weights in the afternoons and is still active with the National Collegiate Wrestling Association, where he is the National Coordinator of Officials.

I'll start with Jim Engstrom, who had been a regular for at least as long as I've been running. He was a little older than me, but I would have to compete in the same age group for a couple of years before he would "graduate" into the next group. I never threatened to beat him in a race as he was at least a couple of minutes in front of me even when I was at my best and running in the 21-minute range for 5Ks. He was a weekend regular at races and also at the Thursday night Trinity 5000. Then I believe it was two summers ago (2014), that he wasn't among the 5000 participants. Note: Well, if you read previous paragraph, you know Jim is still running.

Here are some others, in no particular order, who have left the running scene:

Rodney Orand: He won some races and challenged in others. Maybe what I remember most about him is he led the White Rock Marathon (that's what it was called then) several years ago and I believe it was somewhere at mile 15, 16 or 17, he was fairly far in front and started a conversation with members of the media who were in front of him in an open truck. He was joking and seemingly ready to go the distance. But as we all know, many things (mostly bad) can happen from those miles to the finish. He started showing signs of fatigue not long afterward while the runners behind him started pushing to the front. Rodney didn't win, but he did provide the media an entertaining few miles.

Steve White: He burst on the scene after moving here, and proved to be a formidable masters runner. I met him at a now defunct race near the HEB hospitals. He also won the 1995 Three Amigos Four-Mile Run masters award with a 23:55. He competed for a few years, then "disappeared." Maybe he moved again?

Leo Garcia: Leo was one of the top runners in the area for several years, including winning several races. He won the overall award at the '95 Four Amigos Four Mile Run with a 22:15. He dropped out for a few years (might have been because of injuries) and then came back to run a few more races. I haven't seen him in a few years, so maybe he retired.

George Lutkenhaus: The former North Texas University runner and former Sanger coach, won three consecutive Three Amigos titles from 2006-2008, but haven't heard much from him since...probably moved on to another high school.

Alice Pruitt: A winner of the Cowtown Marathon and several area races, just suddenly quit several years ago. Maybe she tired of hustling from her job that ended early in the morning to a race site.

Michael Pome, who won and challenged in several area races. He was multi-talented, and if I remember correctly spoke several languages. He made time for his various interests by not watching TV. He didn't even have one. He trained 30 miles a week with three 10-mile runs.

Agapius Masong. An elite runner who was among the best. He won the Cowtown 10K twice among his many area and world-wide achievements. He also taught school and coached. I believe he is a personal trainer, maybe in Houston. He was gracious enough to invite me to his home one day to meet and eat an African meal. I seem to remember it was a kind of soup, and very good.

There are so many others, but a brief list of those who made a mark on area road racing and left: Ronnie Fellers, Sarah Broyles, Mary Beth Errington, Leticia Lechon (spelling of last name might not be correct), Junior Lee and many, many others.