

Greetings all runners! As we enter into another holiday season I would like to remind everyone of three important events coming up. The annual Turkey Trot and Jingle Bell races are the first two. Their online and paper registrations have been posted on the website. And the third is the LSRC Christmas party, details have also been posted online. We will be having Mexican food again this year, but we also ask those who attend to bring a side or dessert. Be creative and surprise the group with something fun. I am looking forward to seeing you all at these future events.

The Oktoberfest was another success this year and thanks to Erik and Alesa for all the hard work you put into this event. Charles, thanks for dropping off the Oktoberfest party favors! As for me, I had a great time as usual, but the best part was that I had an opportunity to sit down with a great person and a fantastic runner, Ed Craighead.

Ed started his running career around 40 years old and has been going strong ever since. His first race was in 1983 a little 5K challenge in his home town, Dalhart, TX. His first race proved a real challenge. I got a little tickled that he admitted this since Ed has been passing me in various races for years now! At the time, Ed really didn't know too many runners, but years later he was looking at the results and realized a young lad named Mike Flores ran that very same race. As many of you know, this is ironic because Mike and Ed have many "runcations" together. As I asked about some of their excursions, most of the time the comment was, "Well, you probably shouldn't put that in your article." However, Ed did say that Mike and he have shared many interesting adventures together. Ed described Mike as very adventurous and always full of surprises. Mike on the other hand was a little more forth-coming about these escapades.

It really wasn't until years later when Ed became a faster runner, and Mike slowed down a bit that they really ran together. As Ed became a better runner, he began attending events in Amarillo and had opportunities to meet even more runners that have impacted his life and running success. He recalls, "back in these early days running was a very competitive sport." He was encouraged by the other runners in his age group to become a better and stronger runner to even place. It was his competitive, but fun nature that kept Ed in the sport of running.

Since the early days, Ed has moved onto running a few marathons and longer courses. He loves to explore a beautiful countryside by foot and described the Big Sur Marathon in Carmel, California as absolutely breathtaking. Ed also humbly talked about how amazing it was to do the original Athens's Marathon. The race course wasn't all that great but it was an awesome bucket list experience to run the historic race and finish in the old stadium. He went on a tour with other runners and enjoyed sharing this experience with new found running friends.

Athens wasn't Ed's only out-of-town extravaganza, Mike Flores, Paul Herrmann and he also went as a group to run the Paris Marathon together. This race was very large and extremely disorganized. They started the race on the Avenue des Champs-Elysees and there were no Porta Potties, only urinals, "That's just the way they do it there". They did enjoy the race event, but also had an opportunity to take a little tour of Paris. They also spent a day exploring the beaches in Normandy. As they drove in from the country side to catch their flight early the next morning, Ed recalls trying to get Mike to stop at

one of the many little hotels along the way. Mike thought it best to be closer to Paris since they had to be at the airport very early the next day. When they got back to Paris they were unable to find a place to stay and ended up driving back out towards the country. They finally found a place, but Ed didn't want to pay the 150 Euros for a short 4 hour nap, so he slept in the car while Mike got some sleep and a refreshing shower. Although they did nothing illegal, he was not inclined to disclose much more about this "runcation".

However, Mike Flores wanted to share a few things about that trip that amused him. They had spent a very active day on the beaches of Normandy and got a little sweaty. Ed opted out of staying in the hotel and he attempted to sleep in a car that was tiny he only was able to recline about 2 inches. Basically Ed "slept" upright trying to sleep while Mike was nice and cozy in the hotel bed. Mike was even more amused by Ed's comment after he inquired if he was worried about not taking a shower prior to the flight. Ed's response was, "I don't care. I'm not sitting next to Queen Elizabeth." Of course, he may have used a few more choice words than that.

Mike also shared stories from the Farm Aid 10K event in Austin. The event took place around 1998 or 1999 and was a sweltering day in August. Willie Nelson performed that evening, and even though they were hot and sweaty from the run they just didn't care. During the concert, Ed was in his prime and a source for non-stop jokes and observations. Apparently Willie had recently had carpal tunnel surgery and Ed jokingly told Mike, "He finally met a joint he didn't like."

Mike describes Ed wiggling through the crowd until they were around the second row and very close to the stage. There were some gorgeous young ladies near them and they were dancing vigorously to the music. Ed looked at Mike and exclaimed, "Mike, I've never seen girls move like that, standing up, before. Mike didn't think Ed's country demeanor matched the bawdy statement, but yet he was exactly right about his observation. From then on they didn't spend a lot of time watching Willie. They stayed and enjoyed the entire concert and afterwards indulged in a few margaritas on Sixth Street. The whole time they stayed in their running clothes, but they didn't care. Mike thinks that some of the people around them may have even mistaken them as a couple, but they still didn't care. They were just two friends enjoying a running event and all the joys of life that followed.

Ed has also run the Dublin Marathon several times, and keeps going back to experience the intoxicating countryside. He also ran a marathon in New Zealand and spent about 6-7 days there outside of his running event enjoying the scenic experience. His favorite part of this charming journey was a trip he took to the South Island. Ed explained, "Sometimes you have a place you want to go, but you don't have a deadline unless you sign up for a marathon. Because when you sign up for a marathon you have to do it."

In 1996, they had the 100th year anniversary of the Boston Marathon and there were probably a dozen or so people from the Amarillo area that attended that event. Mike Roberts and Karen Roberts had a condo there that everyone stayed in. The "gang" got to hang out and enjoy that special event together as a group. Ed fondly recalls Red Spicer was there but didn't run. However, he did try to convince most

every female runner he met that they should sign up for his race in the Palo Duro Canyon. I enjoyed hearing Ed's stories about Red Spicer, but most of them can't be discussed in detail in the article.

Ed has competed in many wonderful running events world-wide and have many awesome experiences on his "runcations". He sees no reason why he would ever stop running competitively even if he isn't as good as he once was. He looks forward to the races and the comradery with his fellow runners. He is still in the game and continues to be pushed by his fellow running friends. There is always someone better and he continues to be inspired.

Ed's advice to new runners is that if you want to be good at something you have to practice. Today a lot of the races are more social events rather than the earlier competitive races. Years ago you would be embarrassed if you showed up to a race and didn't place in some way. Now you don't have to be extreme about it, just show up and enjoy the people and the overall experience.

In closing I would like to share Mike Flores' words of wisdom about Ed, "Ed is fearless. He'll travel anywhere. He'll do research to fully experience the local flavor. He will eat almost anything. Ed was the catalyst for me taking my first overseas trip to the Dublin Marathon in November 2007. Ed runs. Ed drinks beer. He is an interesting guy, that is if you have enough time for him to tell you an entire story. You will have to be prepared for his slow, measured Texas drawl." And none of us would have Ed any other way! Thanks Ed for being an inspiration on and off the track.