

# *Fittingly, a McCreary Day*

By Charles Clines

AZLE -- It seemed appropriate that the McCreary clan would have a banner day at the Azle Lake Run, May 20. It was Linda McCreary who was the driving force of beginning the race 25 years ago. On the quarter-of-a-century anniversary, Linda watched 13 of her family members participate in the 10K and 2-mile runs and haul off six trophies, two of them for overall victories in the women divisions.

Christina McCreary Bell of Dallas won the women's two-mile race in 12:47 and Melissa McCreary Hurta of Freeport took first in the women's 10K in 43:45.

"I was race director for the first 10 years," Linda McCreary said after watching the family collect the hardware. "My family talked me out of doing it anymore because I was devoting a good four months on the race..

She watched the event grow to 1,600 participants, but also has watched as its numbers have dwindled to about the 400 who participated this year. She believes it can become a vibrant event again but needs to be resold to the Azle residents and to area runners, who now have more road-race options than they did 15 to 25 years ago.

"We had a lot of good people (helping with the race 25 years ago), and still do. But 15-25 years ago you couldn't keep the people at home on race day. They'd all come out to run or watch," Linda said. She would like to see that town spirit return.

## Azle winners



Christina McCreary  
Bell



Melissa McCreary  
Hurta

## *Azle Lake Run Celebrates 25th Year*

Although the Azle Lake Run's numbers have dwindled over the years, for many Metroplex runners, the 10K still a great race to test one's mettle. And it brought back a lot of memories for many.

Men's 10K winner Mark Miller, a 28-year-old Carrollton resident who ran at Boyd High School, remembers running the 10K when he was 14. He has since won it three times, counting his May 20 victory.

Maybe he had a *deju vu* feeling, too, because he spent the night in Boyd and enjoyed his mother Vicki's homecooking.

He also remembers the course quite well even though he said he hadn't run it in the past three or four years. "It's a challenging course. It has rolling hills, though no one hill is a killer." And, as all runners will attest, the test is after reaching the halfway point, which is mostly downhill, and then returning back up to the finish at the Hornet Track adjacent to Azle High School.

"This might have been my second fastest time here, too," Miller said. "I believe I've been in the 34s here before."

He beat the men this time with a 35:26 clocking.

### **Lot of hardware**

The women's 10K winner was Melissa McCreary Hurta, 43, of Freeport. Melissa, who has missed qualifying for the marathon Olympic trials by eight and 20 seconds, is "gradually getting it back together," after almost six years while recuperating from injuries and devoting more time to family while watching son Ed graduate from high school. Ed, incidentally, was one of the six McCreary-related participants to win a trophy by taking first in the 15-19 two-mile age division with a 12:57.

Others in the McCreary clan to win trophies included two-mile female winner Christina McCreary Bell (12:47), Jon McCreary, first in the 30-39 two-mile (18:23), Joseph McCreary, first in the 60-older two-mile men's division (16:57), and Laura McCreary, first in the 35-39 10K women's division (49:13).

The other overall winner was Dennis Wade of Sherman, who took the men's two-mile trophy with an 11:40. It was Wade's first visit to Azle.

### **Win and a loss**

For Christina, the race was a win-lose for her. She had bet her twin brother Jon a milkshake that she could beat him by 2 minutes because he was pushing a baby jogger. It wasn't enough. He beat the handicap by 24 seconds. "He already owes me a bunch of milkshakes," Christina said, noting that she would just subtract one of the owed ones.

Christina said she's trying to round back into running condition after having a baby about a year ago. She and Jon both ran for Baylor.

### Overcoming chemo and Sanders

In the women's 10K, Debbie Sanders of Springtown and a four-time winner of the women's title, won the masters title in 45:39. She was beaten out of second overall by Shawna Gibson of Fort Worth. It was Shawna's first time to beat Debbie.

But Shawna has been training for an Ironman and her run, bike and swimming training is making her stronger, she said. And after the 10K, she wasn't finished. She was going to run a slow six miles and bike 65. It's even more impressive when Shawna said she has been undergoing chemotherapy after being diagnosed with cancer in September..



Mary Vogle of Azle has run in all 25 Azle Lake Runs. She ran the 2-mile this year and won her 60-older age division with a 22:16. "When I was younger, I would be in the 16s(minute range)," she said. Mary usually runs the 2-mile race, but she said she also has done the 10K a

couple of times.



Mark Miller, 28, starts his trek around the Hornet Track as he heads to the finish of the 10K and the victory in 35:26. The former Boyd resident ran his first Azle run with he was 14.



H.L., 81, and Lois, 80, of English Creek Estates participated in the 2-mile walk at Azle. Both stay active with H.L. tending his large vegetable

garden and Lois her roses. They said they usually walk two miles each morning, race or not. Lois participated in her 14th Azle Lake Run. H.L. said he probably has done 10 or so. "She did it a few years before I started," he said.



Dennis Wade, 48, of Sherman was able to outkick teen John Lisle to win the men's 2-mile run in 11:40. Nine years ago, Dennis said he weighed 212 pounds and had Type II diabetes. "Running has saved my life," Dennis said, noting the diabetes scare is gone. The 5', 6" Dennis has competed in

marathons and ultras since beginning his running habit when the doctor told him he needed to lose 50 pounds. Dennis, who didn't run track in high school, wasn't even recruited by his track coaches after running in the 5:30s with no training and stopping several times to catch his breath. He said the 2005

Boston was his last marathon and now is concentrating on shorter distances. He's on the Texas Instruments corporate track team that will compete in USCA national meet in July in Golden, Colo.



Start of the Azle Lake Run 10K. It was the 25th running of the event, which also featured a 2-mile run and a 2-mile walk.



Following the 10K leaders at Azle.