

Watauga had home cooking

It's nice when a race venue is close, and especially when you can take home the top prizes. That's what happened at the Watauga Fest 5K on Saturday (March 31). Watauga residents won the men's and women's divisions on a sunny, just-perfect-for-running morning.



Kristin Chlup, also a Watauga resident and former collegian runner at Bethel College (Minn.) won the women's division at the Watauga Fest 5K in 22:53.

It was the type of race that the fast, but not fastest runners could win as only 32 had registered. So, Jeff Campanozzi not only beat the men who were there, he also set a PR with his 20:35 effort over the loop course that features a *never-ending* incline for much of the second mile. Kristin Chlup, who had a baby just seven months ago, won the women's title with a 22:53. The former Bethel College (Minn.) runner said she had returned to training about two months ago and was just hoping to beat 27 minutes.

Jeff, 45, said he began running more than 20 years ago when he changed his lifestyle. He had been a smoker and weighed "about 180 pounds." Now, the 5-foot, 4-inch Jeff weighs about 140 pounds. He began running marathons about 10 years ago and said he logs about 50 to 70 miles a week. He said his most recent marathon was Cowtown in February, which he finished in 3:27.



Jeff Campanozzi won the men's race at Watauga with a personal-best 20:35.

Kristin, 37, has lived here for 12 years and said she mainly has been walking since graduating from college. She was somewhat surprised that she had won because "I thought there was a young girl in front of me." Apparently the runner she saw had not entered. However, Kristin has taken winner's trophies before, back in her collegian days. "I've won a 10K before and some races in high school and college," she said.

Race director Brian TenEyck said the second-year race grew by about 10 runners this year. "We're not expecting to get real big," he said. "We do this more as a community service (and to tie in with the Watauga Fest at the city's community center.