

**ARA "RUN HARD, LIVE EASY" 30K & 10-MILE LOST CREEK LOOP**  
**Sunday, January 06, 2008**

I have been inspired lately to begin writing a daily/weekly journal.

What time is it? 4:45 a.m. Why? Because we members of the San Marcos Runners Club are headed towards a race in Austin. It is the normal crowd of Laura Mason, Elma Minor, Teresa Medina, Charlene Martinez and myself. These girls used to be known as the "3 Musketeers," but now they are the "4 Musketeers," because all their last names begin with "M." "Turtles" is another alias of the group. I may refer to these aliases when referring to this group in future journals.

5:00 a.m.

Now we have picked up Charlene and the car is full (four women and one male). Laura asks, "O.K. guys, who knows how to get to this place? I think, this might be a long trip. I usually enjoy the ride as a passenger and take a decent nap on the way there; I still may do so. I think I will send the girls a copy of this journal so they can read the commentary. Perhaps this may become a tradition; this remains to be seen.

5:25 a.m.

I am getting sleepy. I have informed them about my attempt at maintaining a journal as my latest inspirational project.

I shared with them that ("sigh") my running has been sporadic at best, and that I have new running shoes that I purchased yesterday – which means I have not run in them. Wearing new shoes on a race day of any length over 5 miles will almost always get a laugh from veteran runners. The funny thing is, we all know that it's best not to do such a thing because of the obvious breaking-the-shoes-in stories; but despite this experience we still do it! For me, I'd rather run in the new shoes and chance the possible discomfort than run in the worn out, non-supportive shoes that I have been running in for the last few months. I am intending that my feet will be happy at the end of the race. Oh – and did I mention that I have new inserts for arch support also?

5:30 a.m.

We have arrived and are looking for parking. The race does not begin until 7:00 a.m. Someone mentions that we always get *primo* parking; this is followed by laughter because another says, "That's because we are here so early." We open the car doors and it feels 10 degrees cooler, and the wind 10 mph faster compared to 30 minutes ago.

There are dedicated runners/former runners setting up the start/finish line in the dark.

5 minutes later

Almost always, the next question is usually, “Where are the bathrooms? Has anyone seen the port-a-potty?” This biological urge that cannot be denied is ever present with this group. I have often been the running scout to search for the port-a-potties, and today would be no different.



I return to home base bearing unbelievable news; there are no port-a-potties to be found. Yes, I have asked numerous volunteers, I exclaim. The Turtles' necks pop out with claws extended and quickly move towards killing the messenger. The girls are in disbelief and denial. After I am put through the 4 Musketeers' interrogation, the girls decided to venture out for themselves to see what they would not find. After their return, I noticed that Mother Nature was no longer calling but yelling; and off we went, giving up our primo parking spot 30 feet smack in front of the start/finish.

Ahhh, we found a restroom at a convenience store. Can you believe that the restroom was outside, in a port-a-potty! How ironic. At least we discovered all of this early. I feel for the other runners who will undoubtedly have to deal with this while in a frantic state, in the congested parking areas, with Mother Nature calling on them; what a mess this could turn out to be!

## Post-Race

This is the hilliest race I have ever run. Only the participants can relay their experience, and they will. Luckily, I only ran the 10-mile portion. Regardless, I still ran most of the hills.

I could go on and on, but sometimes a picture says it all, or at least helps.



This is the finisher's medal.

Notice the sign.

Notice the runner running up the indicated hill. This medal and art depicting the race does not do the race justice, but the photo can still be of use.

I told a few people after the race that the medal would indicate the race more accurately if the platform the runner was running on was removed, and replaced by the runner running up the inside sign and down the inside sign instead.