

MORGAN HILL THE TIMES

Why Do We Run?

by Craig Lore



“

You’ll love my latest running shirt,” said Tiffany Pereira, 47, of Morgan Hill. “It says: ‘My Sport is Your Sport’s Punishment’.” Running is fun. At least it was, in the beginning, before coaches and PE teachers ruined it for us. That’s a joke. I loved PE. I used to be a coach.

Bernd Heinrich reminds us that “we are all natural-born runners.” For Heinrich, the appeal of running is “primal unadorned simplicity.” He says, “only running itself touches the pure and basic essence of the tension between speed and endurance.”

OK, sure, but running is hard and boring. Jim Fixx in his 1977, “The Complete Book of Running,” quotes William F. Buckley, Jr.: “All I ever managed on those few occasions when I jogged was to concentrate on what a miserable form of self-punishment jogging is.”

However, Nina Kuscik, 1972 winner of the women’s division of the Boston Marathon, told Fixx, “Running gives you freedom. When you run, you can go your own speed. You can go where you want to go and think

your own thoughts.” Joe Henderson said, “Running is a childish and a primitive thing to do. That’s its appeal, I think. You’re moving like a child again.”

“It’s a time to clear your mind, and let things go. It’s kind of a meditative thing,” said Pereira. But it’s also a social thing. “Running has really turned into a community. For me, it’s connecting time with friends. We’re all doing our best. And you know that if you run with people better than you, that you’ll get better. Or if you slow down to help someone else, you still get better. There’s no losing.”

After being sidelined for the past two years during Covid, in-person races are back. A record number of over 1,000 people ran in the Mission Rotary 10 suite of races in San Juan Bautista, January 10. But why would anyone pay money to run in a race when you can get the same benefits for free?

Jeffery Lore, 65, of Sacramento, and my younger brother: “I like to run with friends and be part of a group experience with people that I know. I like the social part of it. I’ve never placed high in a race. Never. But I have the same feeling of competition as anyone, so the outcome for me is the joy of the run, the feel of the crowd, the satisfaction of completion.”

“A race is about camaraderie,” said Ken Oliver, 60, of Morgan Hill. “If you do enough races, you see the same people: There’s this person, Raymond, I’ve never beaten him, but I would go to races and think ‘Maybe, I’ll see Raymond.’”

“You can’t simulate a race without racing,” said Pereira, laughing. “Something about when you know there’s a bunch of people on the line, see runners ahead of you, and you’re trying to pick off people, or someone’s coming on your heels and pushing you to go faster. You can’t simulate that.”

The 39th Annual AAUW Wildflower Run in Morgan Hill will be held on Sunday, March 27. Thirty-nine years is not a fluke. AAUW, Morgan Hill does it right. They’ve always focused on the runners, adding races that appeal to every demographic, certifying the 10K course, offering free photography published on their website, incorporating chip timing starting in 2011, eliminating plastic water bottle waste, supplying t-shirts with distinct artwork, while as a non-profit raising \$65K net profits in 2019 to raise gender equity for women and girls in our community.



But, more importantly, Wildflower runners get to go out and play on a beautiful morning with people who still remember that running is fun. And you get a T-shirt, if you register early. And you help the community. But mostly it’s fun. So, register now, before it fills up, which it does. And before the price goes up. Wildflowerrun.org. I’ll see you there.

Craig Lore is an avid runner and founder of the South Valley Running Club, living in San Martin.