

Lions Club fundraiser race in sight

By Bill Shaw
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ANGLETON — Beginning 8 a.m. Saturday near the Veterans Park Gazebo south of the courthouse, runners will wind through the environs of Angleton in simultaneous 5K (3.1 miles) and 10K (6.2 miles) contests during the Angleton Noons Lion Club Spectacle Spectacular.

“Our ninth annual race continues to fund the Lions Club eyeglass program in local schools,” race director Patrick Henry said. “The Lions Club was challenged by Helen Keller to be knights for the blind when the club was established, and Lions Club International has entered this century as worldwide crusader in the fight against blindness.

“This race helps Lions to recognize our history and fight for sight,” Henry said. “I have either been director or deeply involved with every race since its inception. We just had a group of runners in the club who said ‘We can do this.’ We have now trained the non-runners to put on a quality event.”

According to Henry, the Lions club has raised more than \$30,000 for the eyeglasses program. Participants, volunteers and spectators can donate used eyeglasses at the event that get cleaned, sorted and used overseas.

In its nine-year history,

participants of all ages and speed have participated.

“We almost unanimously hear that we are a favorite race because of our hospitality,” Henry said. “Angleton is a still a small town at heart that reaches out to visitors. Runners also enjoy our fast, flat courses with long straightaways. Volunteers like an event that is over in a short time and has clean, clear goals.”

Race records illustrate the contests had attracted some elite runners from throughout the Gulf Coast area.

Houstonians hold three of the shorter 5K race records. Jose Lara set a blistering pace in 2001 and finished in the male open competition in 15 minutes, 49 seconds. Last year, Jennifer Brown broke the female overall record in 19:35. Regina Schuetz posted the female masters (40 and older) 5K record, 20:40, in 2003. Local Brett Puderbaugh set the male masters record, 18:02, in the 2003 contest.

In the 10K contest, Luis Armenteros set the overall male record in 2007 in 32:05, and Susan Walters of Wallis set the overall female record in 2004 in 40:30. Two Houstonians hold the masters records: Francisco Perez finished in 34:15 in 2007, and Bonnie Jo Barron finished in 43:00 in 2003.

Contest sponsors provide prize money for the top finishers in each of the divisions. The top male and female runners in the 5K receive \$60, and the top male and female in the 10K contest receive \$150.

The top five male and female finishers in eight categories — from 12 and younger to 70

and older — receive medals, and all participants receive T-shirts. Walkers will receive participation awards.

“We have a colorful T-shirt that works our theme in with a very inventive design,” Henry said. “I think it is the best ever, and that Ronnie Zeigler has hit a home run, a long-sleeve white shirt with Lions International colors.”

The First Baptist Church hosts packet pickup and race day registration beginning at 7 a. m. Saturday and the post-race activities and awards.

Race day registration fees are the same for both races: \$25 for adults and \$10 for students. Participants younger than 18 must have the signature of a parent or guardian to participate. No bikes or rollerblades are allowed, and all strollers must start at the back.

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