

# Runners race for the cure

By Bill Shaw

*The Facts*

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WEST COLUMBIA—Home-town runner Grant Parker followed his usual strategy by taking the lead from the start and never looking back to finish first overall in the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Run for the Cure 5K and led his closest challenger by 18 seconds at the finish line.

Parker romped the 3.1-mile route loop from Jefferson Street down to Varner Hogg Plantation and back in 18:32, a 5:59 average mile pace. In last



**Grant Parker**

year's contest, Parker ran a slower 20:17 and finished third.

"I started out with Evan Rogers, and we stayed together for the first half mile," said Parker. "He fell back then. There was always someone about 30 yards behind me, but I didn't know who it was or if runners behind me changed positions. It was a hot and muggy day."

Bobby Wilson and Kevin Regis of Lake Jackson fought for

second behind Parker.

"I just tried to keep Parker in sight and hung in there," said Wilson, 27. "I stayed with Kevin. He passed me in the last half mile, but I caught and passed him before the finish."

Wilson finished second overall in 18:50 with Regis just three seconds behind in 18:53.

"I started off pretty far back but moved up to where I was right behind Bobby," said Regis, 47. "We pretty much ran together for about two and three-quarter miles."

Stewart Crouch, 45, of Angleton finished fourth overall in 19:40 followed by the first overall female runner, Susan Walters, 42, of nearby Wallis in 19:58, a 6:26 race pace.

"I was running with Susan for a while," said Crouch. "When we entered the (Varner Hogg) park, we split up, and I went ahead of her."

"After I entered the park, it was a hard run for me," said Walters. "It was hot today with no breeze. I just tried to keep going and maintain my pace."

Despite her difficulty with the heat, Walters beat last year's best overall time by 44 seconds and the best female masters (40 plus) time by 2:07 to post dual contest records in the overall and masters competition.

Bob Bowden, 49, finished sixth overall 41 seconds behind Walters in 20:39.

"The closest male runner to me was three-quarters of a mile, and there was no way I was go-

ing to catch him."

Evan Rogers, 16, of Angleton High School, who led Parker early in the race, dropped to seventh overall and finished in 21:06."

"I was the rabbit (the pace setter) and paid the price," said Rogers. "The end of school has been busy for me, and I haven't been training."

Parker's wife Wendy finished eighth overall, 12 seconds on the heels of Rogers, in 21:18. Wendy finished first in the overall female competition last year in a faster 20:42.

"I'm a little slower this year because I haven't had time to train," said Parker, 29. "I



**Susan Walters**

wasn't planning on catching Susan. She's always been faster than me and always will be faster than me."

The awards specifically designated open runners (39 and under) and masters runners (40 plus), so Grant Parker, Wilson and Rogers were, respectively, first, second and third in the open



**Kevin Regis**

male competition; Regis, Crouch and Bowden were the top male masters finishers. Parker finished 10 seconds short of the 18:22 contest record, but Regis broke the previous 20:30 male masters record by 1:33.

Wendy Parker placed first in the open female competition. Terry Allen, 38, of Lake Jackson finished 18<sup>th</sup> overall in 24:14 for second, and youngster Emily Robinson, 10, finished 28<sup>th</sup> overall in 29:38 to win third.

Allen and friend Sue Wheeler, 45, of Houston, who finished second in the female masters competition, had identical times because they ran together.

“We ran together because we both weren’t feeling well and were doubtful about what we could run,” said Wheeler.

“We talked the whole way to keep ourselves motivated,” said Allen.

“The last mile was the hardest for me,” said Robinson, who ran her first 5K race.

Laurie Fisher, 43, of Lake Jackson ran for a reason and fin-

ished third in the female masters competition in 29:19.

“My husband and I are running for our son in the Air Force in England; he is getting ready to go to Iraq,” said Fisher, who recently moved to the area from Virginia. “We agreed to run so we can run with him when he gets back.”

Twenty-nine walkers joined the 50 runners to go the 5K distance. The top female



**Wendy Parker**

walkers were Chere Rankin, 44, in 46:44, Mary Koether, 49, in 39:17 and Amy Koether, 23, in 39:39. The top male walkers were Wilson Huffer, 67, in 48:44, Matthew Whelan, 33, in 51:07 and Joe Carter, 70, in 53:42.

The Run for the Cure benefits the American Cancer Society Relay for Life Committee and this year raised approximately \$1,600, said Teresa Holland, race director. Chevron Phillips, ConocoPhillips, My Health Wellness, Billy’s Garage, Don’s Guns and Supplies,

Stewart’s Food Store and H.E.B sponsored the event.

“I was very happy for the turnout and no rain today,” said Holland. “Special thanks to the City of West Columbia for the use of the American Legion Hall and pavilion and to the police. We have a great race committee, and they pitched in to make the race a success. I am a cancer survivor myself, so I appreciate the workers’ and the participants’ coming together in our fight against cancer. We hope everyone in the race had a good time.”

For complete overall race and age-group results, see [www.barrahome.net](http://www.barrahome.net).



