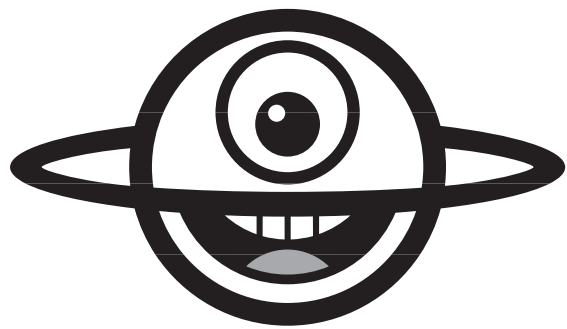




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Running

BY MICHAEL BLACK

One Mile at a Time

Jerry Stromme transforms himself

Jerry Stromme, warehouse manager and trucker by trade, is a man with a great story to tell. People who knew him in the past and see him now are amazed at how he has transformed himself.

His experiences with running opened possibilities unavailable to him seven years ago. It probably saved his life.

Stromme is a native of south Eugene and continues to live there. His lineage is Norwegian, he has a chiseled face and a gray beard; his appearance and energy radiate joy and vigor.

There was a time when he suffered with poor health and obesity. He was 28 when he had his first heart attack. The second one

As his treadmill performance improved, he looked to try different forms of running. In 2004, a friend, Susan, whom he met at the gym, suggested signing up for Run for the Cure, a 5K (3.1 miles) road race located in Eugene. More comfortable now running in public, he continued to improve, reinforced



He was 228 pounds at his peak weight and decided he did not want to have a third heart attack.



After

by praise, camaraderie and cheers from others.

He recalls his first Butte to Butte, a 4th of July 10K or 6.2 mile road race. The runners start at Spencer Butte Middle School, go up a steep hill the first mile and then down Fox Hollow through the streets of Eugene to finish at Skinner Butte Park. He set a goal of finishing in less than an hour. He achieved his goal and says it gave him a great sense of accomplishment and more confidence.

During the past year, Stromme ran three progressively faster marathons (26.2 miles), a half marathon through the Redwoods in Northern California and many other races.

Running with groups has been a very important part of his running experience. "The social aspect is huge," he says. "People look out for each other, care, give feedback, advice and encouragement. No matter where you are in the pack, people are always there to encourage you."

When asked to give advice to others, he emphatically states, "You have to do it, and at some point you ought to get a crowbar put under your ass and pop it out of your chair."

"Get up and do something. If it means walking, do that. If jogging feels good, do that. If jogging doesn't feel good, go back to walking. You can win your race. It can be coming in last if it's [your] first race, or it can be in the middle of the pack if it's your best time. Just decide to and just do something."

EW

Michael Black is founder and co owner of Eugene Running Company.