

Moving Right Along

Zooming through the holidays with the runs

BY SHANNON FINNELL

So much of the holiday season is about indulgence, especially in the feasts that we fantasize about all month, using paper chains made from cheap food take-out menus to count down. To create some balance with all that gorging, Tracktown USA boasts a cornucopia of holiday-themed recreational events to get your gizzard shaking.

Willamalane Parks and Recreation District starts things off Saturday, Nov. 19 with the **Turkey Shoot** free throw contest. Participants have one minute to make as many free throws as possible. Each minute-long round costs \$2, and going overboard in the name of your own insatiable thirst for self record-breaking is OK, because proceeds support middle-school athletics. Each age bracket can score prizes like a gift card for a Thanksgiving turkey.

The season's first holiday charity run/walk takes place Thanksgiving Day at Lively Park in Springfield. This will be the **Turkey Stuffer's** 30th year, and it's all in the name of Willamalane's free summer playground program, which serves more than 1,000 children. All runners win cinch bags, and special prizes include gift cards for Eugene Running Company, movies, food and gas, plus a weekend at Sunriver. Organizers ask that participants don't register children in strollers since they don't need bib numbers, and no dogs are allowed. The 5K loops through residential Springfield to finish back at Lively Park's Splash! The indoor water park will host a free swim until 11:30 am for race participants and their families.

Those who really hustle might be able to figure out a way to run both the Turkey Stuffer and **EWEB's Run to Keep Warm** on Thanksgiving; the 5K and 10K start just 45 minutes after the Stuffer begins. The event includes the 5K and 10K, a half marathon and a kids' 400-meter dash. The courses will be a visual treat, rain or shine, because they all start at EWEB Plaza and follow the Willamette River. Beginning at 10 am, The Cooler is hosting an after party for those who'd like to start celebrating Thanksgiving early. The run, which happens to be *Runner's World* magazine's November 2011 "Race of the Month," benefits EWEB's Customer Care Program's efforts to help low-income customers pay their utility bills.

For some of us, the urge to make up for holiday gluttony starts right after Thanksgiving. The city hosts a **Turkey Burn** aquatic fitness class at Sheldon Pool and Echo Hollow Pool on Saturday, Nov. 26. It costs just \$5 to drop in.

Jogging into December, the **Jingle Bells Run** (Saturday, Dec. 10) features holiday carolers along the routes and benefits Parkside Community Preschool. The 12K and 8K runs and 5K run/walk begin at Maurie Jacobs Park and follow the Willamette River.

Celebrate nature and the coming sun — well, six more months of rain and then sun — with the **Winter Solstice Run** 5K run Sunday, Dec. 18, at Amazon Park Recreation Center. The run/walk follows Amazon Creek and takes place on a flat, fast course that is about 60 percent paved path and 40 percent bark chip.

Finally, runners can usher in 2012 on the move with **First Run 10K Run & 5K Run/Walk**, which starts at Valley River Inn just one minute before 2012. The celebration continues the next day with another set of races at 10 am, but athletes can run just one race.

These are just a few events providing ways to stay active during the leisure season, but there are plenty more ways to keep mobile in this "great city for the arts and outdoors." **HH**



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