



The Astoria Social Running Club meets Tuesday afternoons and organizes its informal, social runs in a Facebook group.



Runners compete a race before the Astoria Regatta Grand Land Parade in downtown Astoria.

cool breeze from the water. Accessibility makes the Riverwalk ideal for any time of day when wanting to go for a quick run, whether you're in Uniontown, downtown or even in Alderbrook.

Traveling back and forth on the pavement might get old, and it's good to mix it up. The surface a person runs on is just as important as the scenery surrounding them. For runners wanting to get to a real running trail, Lewis and Clark National Historical Park is only a short drive away. The trail system in the historic park allows runners to take well-marked paths or create their own course as they go by linking together different sections.

Seasoned runners should try the Fort to Sea Trail, which starts at Fort Clatsop and will have them jumping over roots and traveling along cattle farms before they are spit out at Sunset Beach in Warrenton. The entire route out and back is over 12 miles, but trail traffic is fairly light and runners can expect to only come across occasional hikers and wild rabbits.

Andrew Fick, the head cross country coach at Astoria High School, makes it a point to get out to the surrounding parks in order to mix it up and get a variation while running.

"It's like a mini vacation for an hour. I love that you can find places to really run fast or places to just stretch out and get lost. And all



Jim Cooley, second from right, checks his watch and stretches before beginning a run with members in the Astoria Social Running Club. The group meets Tuesday evenings in front of Fort George Brewery.

right in our backyard," he said.

A large part of the coach's job involves getting new runners out with the team. This can be difficult because many high schoolers even dread running the mile in P.E. class. The young coach explained that between wanting to be with their friends or racing competitively there are a multitude of reasons why kids join the high school's cross country team.

"I usually try to meet people where they are at and help them connect with their reason for running," said Fick. "Lots of reasons for people to run, sometimes it's just about making those connections.

Coaches and motivators like Fick are harder to find once you get out of school, but there is a local group that can help you make your own connection to running right in Astoria.

Whether you're looking for friends to push

you in your training or just want to start jogging for the first time ever, the Tuesday night social run in Astoria makes exercising a little less painful and a lot more fun. There are no membership fees or attendance sheets; the runners simply plan the event on the Facebook group "Just Run Bike Swim Astoria." The group meets on Tuesday evening in front Fort George Brewery on Duane Street.

The social running club is a mixed-aged group that varies from members just trying to get in shape and others who are training for triathlons. They welcome anyone who just wants to get out and go.

"I think people are just intimidated to come out because they think they have to run fast," said Nancy Frederick. Having run her whole life, the third grade teacher looks forward to the weekly group runs and is training for a 50K.

Some members move away and others might only come once, but the group is always looking for more people to join and welcomes anyone who might be the slightest bit interested to get involved.

The key to keeping the runs fun is the reward. Once everyone's returned and stretched out, the group goes into the brewery to recharge with liquid carbs. "Oh, always a beer after," said Frederick.