

# Running Around

Sometime during the sixties at the age of forty, I began running for exercise. It was one of the best things I ever did for myself. For several years, I would do one or two miles daily on the indoor track at the Wilmington YMCA. Later I discovered the pleasures of outdoor running and the distance increased to an average of five or six miles daily.



Still later, I began running instead of eating lunch at at HP. I was a curiosity at first, but I infected many of my colleagues with the virus. It would become commonplace for groups of a dozen or more to hit the back roads around the plant at lunch time.

Weather was rarely a deciding factor for my running. I remember that on one cold, rainy day I was about three miles out on one of the back roads. A guy in a pickup truck pulled up beside me, rolled down his window and said, "Are you alright?" I assured him that I was and continued running. He stayed behind me for about five minutes before pulling up again to say "Are you sure that you are alright?" I assured him again that I was fine, and he drove off. I could imagine what he was thinking.

On another occasion I was one of about a hundred runners in a 10K (6.25 miles) race. I was cruising along, well on my way to my best time ever for that distance, when disaster struck. While crossing a divider strip between two roads I tripped on a rock, fell forward and jammed my left hand into the raised edge of a sidewalk. It was about the halfway point of the race, and I knew that the finish line was the nearest place for me to get help. I caused a few raised eyebrows when I ran to the finish line.

I was given first aid and taken to the emergency room of a hospital. It was a weekend, and the doctor on duty didn't do a very good repair job. Two days later my family doctor sent me back to have it redone. As I write this I still can't make a closed fist.

At the age of 45 I got the bug to enter the half marathon scene. The Caesar Rodney half marathon (thirteen plus miles) was coming up, and I decided to go for it. I wasn't ready for that kind of distance, but I did it and finished - well back in the pack. I remember that I had my own private cheering section. It seems that every time I rounded a corner either Mary or Mason

Byles, the division manager, was there with encouragement. Mason was inspired by this to start running and later competed in the Boston Marathon.

### Note from the HP Avondale Division Newsletter



Congratulations Lou Mikkelsen! Lou accomplished something last Sunday, April 3, that no one else at Avondale would have considered trying by finishing the Caesar Rodney half marathon. It began in down town Wilmington at Rodney Square and wanders 13+ miles through the streets of Wilmington and the Delaware countryside. If you think running a mile or so on a flat track is tough, try running 13 miles up and down some real hills. It's a killer! Of the 558 participants who started, 514 finished. The winner, who also won the Boston Marathon last year made it in 1 hour 8 minutes. Lou was #417 at 2 hours 2 minutes.

Emery Rodgers had preceded Mason as division manager. He was a gentleman, a runner, and a friend. I had sent him a photograph of my crossing the finish line. His letter in response has a cherished place among my memorabilia. Below is an excerpt from his letter.

When a good idea springs up around the analytical circuit of Hewlett Packard, it can almost always be traced back to a quiet, original suggestion or demonstration by Lou Mikkelsen.

We all owe you a tremendous debt of gratitude. You have shown us so many good ways so many times.

Best Always,  
Emery

Would I do it again if I could start over? The answer is emphatically YES! I stopped running at the age of seventy. I should have continued.