

## **We are runners**

### **- By Doug Kurtis**

You can be a runner. It's one of the easiest and cheapest sports to get started in. A pair of running shoes, a few simple outfits and out the door you go.

Runners, we come in all shapes, sizes and colors. We represent every nationality and religion in the world. Some of us are famous millionaires and some live in dirt floor shacks in the most remote areas of the world. More than 33 million of us live in the U.S. and 1.2 million of those are in Michigan. Of the latter, over 100,000 finished a race last year.

At work or on the street you may not recognize us. Except for the sinewy elites, you probably couldn't guess that we are runners. If you asked us about one of T-shirts we have picked up from virtually every road race, we could proselytize about the sense of accomplishment we have derived from our sport.

We stage races in virtually every country in the world. We love being part of a major spectacle such as Bay to Breakers 50,000 plus finishers or jumping into an ultra trail marathon with less than 50 people.

Some of us joined the sport because it's inexpensive. Some of us spend thousands of dollars traveling to exotic places. Last year at Chicago's marathon, 65% of us came from out of town and we pumped \$90 million dollars into the economy. In Michigan we support more running specialty shops than any other state.

Our shoes are often picked by style and color, some by stability, motion control or brand. Few of us don't wear a watch. We get addicted to logging in our miles. We sometimes monitor our heart rate with a band across our chest or use the latest gadget, which can tell us how fast, and far we are running via satellite.

We find safety and simulation via the treadmill and we will go to every corner of the planet to discover a new path. Antarctica, Pikes Peak, underwater miles, parking ramps, through streams, jungles or some of the busiest streets and bridges in the world are just of the few places we find our creativity and excitement.

We'll do the craziest of things for attention. Watch us running backwards, dribbling basketballs, juggling, wearing the silliest of costumes or nothing at all. We're trendsetters, but some of think it's cool to look uncool. We'll wear black socks with our shorts, tattered blue jeans or medical scrubs for warm ups. We'll do the baggy look or the tight look.

"No Limits" or "Just do it" are some of our mottos. We have positive attitudes, we are generally happy most of the time because we've discovered how to release the endorphins of our brain. Come and join us we accept every application.