

Master class

Matt Parrott nips shin splints in the bud.
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ACTIVESTYLE

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Fitness council to hail hale leaders

CELIA STOREY
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

The Arkansas Governor's Council on Fitness is looking for fitness-promoting leaders to thank and encourage through its annual Leadership in Physical Fitness Awards.

The council doesn't wander the state noticing such people. The council has enough to do just sitting at its several desks. Instead, leaders must be nominated — by their admirers or by themselves.

As it did last year, the council will pick winners in these categories: corporate, government agency, individual, group, senior citizen, health and fitness club, school or school district, physical educator and trails.

Yes, a trail might be a leader, if it's very sure of itself.

But wait, the council has just added a 10th category: built environment.

"We're trying to get every city to become a built environment where they have complete streets, where they have sidewalks, trails, where at least every street has a sidewalk so people can get outside and get moving," Gina Marchese Pharis explains. The executive director of the Little Rock Marathon, she's one of 13 members of the council and co-chairman for the leader-awards ceremony.

"Candidates for this award would be communities who have built trails or advocated that their city put more sidewalks in or designed a great playground in a central part of their neighborhood," she says.

If your community sought and received a Safe Routes to School grant from the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department, for example, that would qualify.

Trails may be part of a built environment, but not all of it. To honor a trail, nominate it for the trails award, which, she adds, is "for trails." For instance, last year's winner was the Medical Mile in downtown Little Rock.

The first winner, in 2008, was the Hot Springs Village Trails Committee, though, so the category is still a little confusing.

Well, she explains, someone has to pick up the award. The trail won't come get it. If a fearless leader made that trail possible, that person could be mentioned as part of the nomination.

Or you could nominate that person for the individual leadership award.

The idea is to congratulate people or entities for "outstanding promotion of physical activity," she says.

To nominate someone or some organization (or to nominate

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Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/KAREN E. SEGRAVE

Feet move back and forth during a recent clog-dancing practice at Irby Dance Studio in Conway. There are lots of funny names for dance moves in clogging, says instructor Donna Bivins. Sometimes, step names correspond to words in a song. If a song mentions "hog holler," for instance, there might be a "hog" step.

Called to clog

Enthusiasts of the pioneer-derived dance say it's fun and healthful

HELAINÉ R. WILLIAMS
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

It resembles tap dancing. It resembles line dancing. It resembles square dancing. It resembles Irish dancing.

It's in the swinging back and forth, side to side, of the leg. The bending of the raised knee. The way the heel and the toe hit the ground and the loud, decisive sound of the tap made by the white oxford shoe ... a sound that amplifies the music accompanied by the dance.

It's called clogging, or clog dancing. And one thing's for sure: Well-performed examples of it are infectious, leaving watchers mesmerized, wanting to join in — or thinking, "this has got to be a great way to stay fit."

It is. C.J. Conine, 55, a retired ballet teacher and member of the Conway Kickers, a Conway-based competition team, saw clogging for the first time during a trip to Silver Dollar City in Branson. "I had two daughters [who] just fell in love with it," she says. In 2006, her daughters talked her into taking a clogging class. "They bailed pretty quick," Conine recalls. "[but] Mommy was hooked."

That same year, Conine found out she had osteopenia, bone thinning that's seen as a precursor to osteoporosis. Instead of medication, she opted to take the doctor's suggestion of taking up a load-bearing exercise. In 2007, Conine returned to her doctor for a bone-density test. The osteopenia was "totally reversed," she says.

"My doctor asked, 'What have you been doing for the past year?' and I said, 'Clogging.'"

That's not all. After four years of clogging, Conine has lost 30 pounds.



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/KAREN E. SEGRAVE

Lanita Hammett (center, in red) along with Pam Winslow (left) and C.J. Conine clog dance recently at Irby Dance Studio in Conway. Clogging is often confused with square dancing. Donna Bivins, director of a competitive clogging team, Conway Kickers, notes a key difference: With square dancing, someone calls out the steps. In clogging, steps are not called.

Someone once asked Donna Bivins if clogging guaranteed weight loss, recalls the instructor, who directs the Conway Kickers and is vice president of the Arkansas Clogging Council. Bivins recalls her reply: If nothing else, it will "pack you in real tight."

It tones everything, she says — dancing is done mostly from the waist down, so it whittles the waist, tones the legs and gives the dancer "a fine butt." The upper body gets a workout just by virtue of the dance itself, and is toned through claps and other hand work, Bivins adds.

DOES A BODY GOOD

Clogging, or clog dancing — a rhythmic dance in which tapping of the feet is emphasized, has been brought to the forefront on the TV competition show *America's Got Talent* by such standout teams as All That and the Southern Belles — who "showed the world how modern clogging could be," says Leona Miller of Jonesboro. Miller is president of the Arkansas Clogging Council and director of the Crowley Ridge Cloggers, an exhibition team that performs at various venues but does not compete.

Clogging includes basic movements (double toe, basic step, double step, rock), grouped together into two-, four- and eight-count steps and put to music. As beginners advance, the step names grow more creative: Shave and a Haircut, Cotton Eyed Joe, Pot-hole.

The dancing can be performed at different tempos, slow and folksy, fast and intricate — and, these days, to all music genres, not just the bluegrass music with which it has been traditionally associated.

Although the footwork can get pretty fancy-looking when performed by advanced cloggers, "all steps, no matter how advanced, are just different combinations of the basics," Miller assures.

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SIX-MINUTE MILE

We will blind you with arithmetic

BOBBY AMPEZZAN
ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

I am your seven-minute miler determined to show you a six-minute mile by Labor Day.

Alas, I am also your standard second-half slacker. I diesel through the first 30 minutes of a workout program, and that's when I say, "You deserve a break." That break chews up the rest of the program.

Josh Martin, your 27-year-old former University of Oklahoma cross country runner, and I, your 33-year-old junior varsity reserve point guard, have been working through several interval running programs. These are, on separate days, 400s, 800s, 1,600s.

Here's a standard program itinerary:

- 1 mile warm-up, with a pause for stretching midway
- 8 x 400 sprints with a target time of 1:30
- Intermittent 400-meter walk/jog recovery
- 1 mile cool-down run
- Stretch

Cadets' track times

The Missouri Western State University Law Enforcement Academy's 1.5-mile times fall into three categories, adjusted for age and sex — excellent, average and passing.

Men	AGE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	PASSING
	21-29	10:08	10:09-13:07	15:56
	30-39	10:38	10:39-13:47	16:46
	40-49	11:09	11:10 to 14:32	18:26
	50-59	12:08	12:09 to 16:15	20:17
Women	AGE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	PASSING
	21-29	11:56	11:57-15:55	15:56
	30-39	12:53	12:54-16:45	16:46
	40-49	13:38	13:39-18:25	18:26
	50-59	15:14	15:15-20:16	20:17

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Here's the actual program.
1/2 mile warm-up without stretching
2 x 400 sprints with an actual time of 1:30
1 x 400 sprint with an actual time of 1:40
2 x 400 sprints with whatever time
Intermittent 400-meter

walks, teeth bared, arms akimbo
Vigorous complaints about the sun heaping senseless suffering down on our best intentions.
Josh Martin isn't half the slacker I am, or half the Svengali. Still, there are times I see my pathetic pain mirrored in his eyes. I think

we're both a little worried that we won't hit this six-minute mile mark by Labor Day, our arbitrary finish date.

I am your Uncle Doubting Thomas.

YOUR RACING HEART

Normally I have a kind of Red State-Blue State relationship with my heart — we're not simpatico, and bitter our fates are yoked — so I never cared to listen to its sometimes palpitant song.

The key to performance gains is building speed with a maintainable heart rate, Martin says. That is, instead of sprint-collapse, sprint-collapse, we raise our heart rates to a level sub-maximal, maintain, then drop it to a moderate working rate. We do this with the aid of a heart rate monitor (Polar FS3, \$62).

What is maximum heart

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Mouth rinse adds energy in studies

GINA KOLATA
THE NEW YORK TIMES

Exercise scientists say they have stumbled on an amazing discovery. Athletes can improve their performance in intense bouts of exercise, lasting an hour or so, if they merely rinse their mouths with a carbohydrate solution.

They don't even have to swallow it.

It has to be real carbohydrates, though; the scientists used a solution of water and a flavorless starch derivative called maltodextrin. Artificial sweeteners have no effect.

And the scientists think they have figured out why it works. It appears that the brain can sense carbohydrates in the mouth, even unflavored ones. The sensors are different from the sensors for sweetness, and they prompt the brain to respond, spurring on the athlete.

Many athletes depend on sugary beverages to keep them going. But often, when blood is diverted from the



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/DUSTY HIGGINS

stomach to working muscles during intense exercise, drinks or foods cause stomach cramps. So a carbohydrate rinse can be a way to get the same effect.

"You can get an advantage from tricking your brain," said a discoverer of the

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