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Marathon veterans just can't stop

Many run all over the world

By JAVIER SERNA

Staff Writer November 6, 2010

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- When: 7 a.m. Sunday

Where: starting and finishing on N.C. State's Centennial Campus

Registration: through 6 p.m. today at N.C. State's McKimmon Center (1101 Gorman St.); no race-day registration

Learn more:

www.cityofoaksmarathon.com

Running Brooke: Learn about Brooke Curran, the Virginia marathon runner competing as part of a charity pledge, at www.runningbrooke.com.

RALEIGH — Among the more than 3,500 runners expected for Sunday's City of Oaks Marathon will be a hard-core contingent who just can't get enough

"It takes a certain mindset to run this many marathons," said Brooke Curran, who is midway through a charity pledge to run a marathon every month until she has run in every state and on every continent.

With five continents and 15 states out of the way, the Alexandria, Va., runner still comes up short compared to some other members of the 50 States Marathon Club, which has nearly 2,248 members in 50 states and 11 foreign countries.

Take Durham's Rich Holmes, who has run in 270 marathons. He's on his third trip through the 50 states.

Holmes said he began running in his late 20s, embarrassed that he was the most out of shape person in his Army training class.

"I don't view myself as an athlete," said Holmes, 60. "I just don't know when to stop running."

After he completes Sunday's marathon and another in Richmond next weekend, he will have met his goal of completing 50 marathons at age 60.

His longer-term goal is to become the only known club member to have run marathons on all seven continents twice, all provinces and territories of Canada twice and in all 50 states three separate times.

"That'll be my claim," he said.

The club's founding members, Steve and Paula Boone of Humble, Texas, met at the Boston Marathon in 1997.

Paula was on her fourth marathon, and Steve had just finished the 50 states.

"He was a very bad influence, and he got me roped into this crazy world," Paula Boone said.

The couple will be completing their milestones Sunday while running the City of Oaks. She will be completing her third 50-state tour. He will be completing his fifth 50-state tour.

There are similar clubs, such as the Seven Continents Club and the United Kingdom's 100 Marathon Club, whose president, Roger Biggs, will be here this weekend to run along with Jack Brooks.

"They're interesting fellows," said Holmes, who went to great lengths organizing a marathon in Ninavut, the vast and remote Canadian territory.

Holmes and his wife were among 11 runners who ran a marathon that had armed guards patrolling the course for polar bears.

Even so, Holmes' wife ran upon a bear with cubs, but the animals slipped into the ocean, he said.

Curran also uses her marathon habit to fuel charity fundraising.

"I told myself, this is just one to get through, not worry about a decent time," said Curran, who raised \$20,000 for Child and Family Network Centers, which provides education to poor children in Alexandria. She said 100 percent of donations go to charity.

"I live in an area where there's lots of people that are less fortunate than I am, so I'm running for them," Curran said.

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