

## Races to Travel To

by John Farrow

Well, the 1996 list of the *Runner's World* Top 100 runs in the country is out, and guess how many runs in New Mexico made the list. You guessed it! Zippo! Zilch! Nada! We got dissed big time. The list used to include both the Duke City Marathon and the Run for the Zoo, but not even a mention for the DCM run shirt this year. Time to start writing those cards and letters.

But admit it: both races have had problems with accurate courses. The Zoo 10k in recent years has seemingly ranged somewhere between about 4.5 and 8 miles. Not good. But maybe it was really the photo of Mayor Chainsaw plodding along with Slick Willie in DC that was too much for the *Runner's World* folks. They just threw up their hands and said "No mas!"

With the '96 calendar out, it's time to start thinking about runs to travel to. The following are some that the Half-Fast Runner has enjoyed in the past and that can be recommended without reservation.

**Conoco Rodeo 10k.** Houston, Texas (2/10/96). One of the flattest and straightest courses around. Start downtown by the beautiful new Performing Arts Center and after a quick right turn onto Main Street, set the cruise control, because there's not another turn until the last mile. The finish is in the Astrodome parking lot with lots of food and drink. Free shuttle back to the start.

**Capitol 10,000.** Austin, Texas (3/24/96). A beautiful run through the rolling hills of west Austin, flattening out along the Colorado River for the last 4 miles. Lots of craziness and runners in costume. This is always a tough race after a night on 6th Street in the blues clubs, but catching Omar and the Howlers or the Fabulous Thunderbirds at Antone's makes it all worth while.

**Bay to Breakers.** San Francisco, California (5/19/96). What can I say that hasn't already been said? Serious Craziness. Mardi Gras at a faster pace. A surprisingly flat course, considering the setting. In the 4th mile, you

enter the Castro District, where the streets are lined with the local folk decked out in native costumes, like black leather, chains and chiffon. Lots of music in Golden Gate Park, with the finish on Route 1 along the beach.

**Wharf to Wharf.** Santa Cruz, California (7/28/96). Stunningly beautiful course winding along the coast south from Santa Cruz. Every turn presents you with a postcard view of the Northern California coast. The 6 mile route is lined with 30+ different bands, from a string quartet to blues to rock to country to... you name it. Great post-race party on the beach at Capitola. Free shuttle back to the start. The race fills up by mid-June.

**Bridge to Bridge.** San Francisco, California (10/6/96). Your chance to see the Embarcadero free of cars, if only for a moment. A beautiful course along the waterfront, past Fisherman's Wharf, around Ghiardelli Square with its chocolate smells wafting into the morning air, through the Marina district and the Presidio to the Golden Gate and back along the bay to the Marina Green. Lots of free food and goodies.

**Route 66 10k.** O.K. This is one race that should be, and maybe ARR is just the club to pull it off. Start near Central and San Mateo, straight down Central, through Nob Hill, UNM, downtown, Old Town, finishing in Tiguex Park. Put a '50s spin on the festivities, with an Elvis impersonator for the starter or leading the race in a Cadillac convertible. Get some bands to set up along the route, have mile markers with the Route 66 emblem on it, maybe have a contest for runners in costume. Have "Elvis" put on a show at the finish. Run it either Memorial Day or Labor Day weekend. This would be a fast course, to boot. What about it?

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