

Güd Run Club gives back to community

By JAMES "TAL" MOSS
For the Republic-Times

To those who know him, Taylor Sebestik is something of a running guru.

In addition to running himself, Sebestik coaches the cross country and track teams at Waterloo Junior High School.

So, friends and coworkers would come to him when they needed advice on running. Eventually, some asked him about meeting to run together.

Sebestik sent an email out last spring as a feeler to gauge people's interest, and the response was resounding.

"There was a lot of people interested from any level of 'you've piqued my interest' to 'I'm all for it, when can we start' kind of attitude," he said.

And so began the Güd Run Club.

It started as a casual way for



Pictured are members of the Güd Run Club during one of its first meetings at Stubborn German Brewing Company. (submitted photo)

individuals with varying levels of seriousness about running to socialize and exercise. It soon transformed into something different.

"At some point we decided we would like to have a good theme to it," Sebestik recalled.

That theme became giving

back to the community, as the club now uses its gatherings to raise funds for charities and people in need.

So far, the Güd Run Club does that in two ways. Its members can buy T-shirts, with some of the money going toward a rotating cause.

They can also drink at Stubborn German Brewing Company on Thursday nights when the group meets because 15 percent of their money will go toward whatever cause they are supporting.

"They were awesome," Sebestik said of the brewery. "They were all about it right off the bat."

He also credited Patrick Ahrens, owner of Full Throttle Screen Printing, with helping the group raise the majority of its money so far through the T-shirt sales.

"As the thing has progressed from just an idea in our head to something that's going on, people are like 'we should make shirts and we should come up with a name,'" Sebestik said. "So (Ahrens) was huge in helping me come up with shirts and he was all about it, as well."

The idea behind the group is two fold. It is meant to both give runners a way to socialize while running and help raise money for worthy causes.

"It's just kind of getting peo-

ple out and about," Sebestik said, noting members can also walk or ride a bicycle. "We also want to raise some money for good causes. We just thought the surrounding community would be a good way to do that."

The causes for which the Güd Run Club raises funds change. To date, the group of around 20 individuals has raised \$675 for Camryn Coughlin's family, donating it through the House of Neighborly Service.

Coughlin has a rare genetic disorder known as Adrenoleukodystroph, which is characterized by the breakdown or loss of the fatty covering surrounding nerve cells in the brain and progressive dysfunction of the adrenal gland.

That fundraiser ended in August. The new organization that will soon receive money from the club is Kellsie's Hope Foundation, which provides support and hope to families that have children with cancer.

The group has only raised about \$65 so far, but it has not yet made an earnest push for money.

Sebestik said efforts like that are in line with the club's name, which was meant to be simple and have meaning.

"It's just the Güd Run Club

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RUN CLUB

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because we trying to get some good things done and help people out," Sebestik said.

The club's name also pays tribute to the German heritage in Waterloo, though Sebestik said "güd" is not spelled or pro-

nounced like "good" in German.

The people the group helps also include its members.

"Running is one of those things that even people who love to do it, like myself, don't

always love to do it," Sebestik said. "So the motivation and drive to get yourself to do it on a lot of those days is not easy to come by.

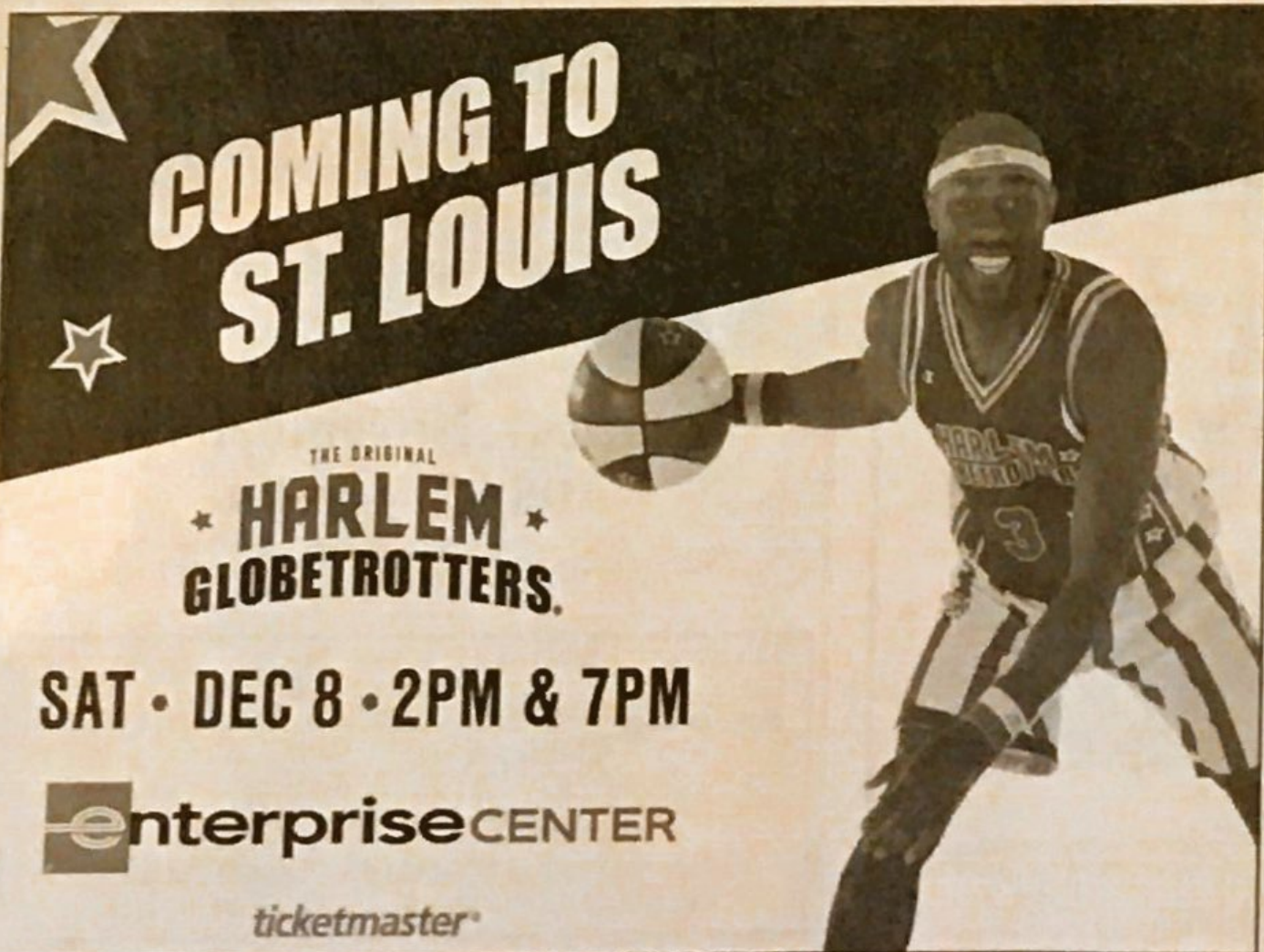
"I would say the biggest thing to create consistency is

having somebody or some thing to keep you accountable," he continued. "I think this group can offer that to anybody, whether they're a professional or somebody who is just getting started. I think accountability is huge and it also offers a great social atmosphere."

Anyone is welcome to join the group, no matter their running experience.

For more information on the group, search "Güd Run Club" on Facebook and join the group.

"I think we've got a lot of room to grow," Sebestik said. "I've got a handful of ideas to get more community involvement and give back to the community, which is really the biggest goal."



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