

Marathon registration set

This year's West Bloomfield Half-Marathon Race begins at 12:30 p.m. Sunday, April 15 when more than 1,000 runners will compete for top honors.

"This year, we expect our biggest race ever," said Sally Pierce, race director. Competitors can run off income-tax frustrations when they compete for awards in 10 categories in the annual event, co-sponsored by the Henry Ford Hospital-West Bloomfield Center and the West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation Department.

Charlie Blanchard, well-known area runner who ran in the half-marathon last year, describes the course.

"It's an interesting course with lots of turns and direction changes, quiet streets and main roads and no doubling back, but it's not an easy course to run," he said. "The weather is so variable that time of year. There's always wind and, of course, the hills that can make the race difficult."

THE 13.1-MILE race, which initially was a full-marathon in 1977, winds through trim subdivisions and semirural streets of West Bloomfield Township. Ninety percent of the course is on paved roads.

The 8-year-old race is sanctioned by The Athletics Congress, the national organization that monitors running competitions.

The starting gun will crack at 12:30 p.m. at West Bloomfield High School, on Orchard Lake Road between Walnut Lake Road and Lone Pine Road, where he race begins.

Race watchers can expect the leading runners to come through the chute at the finish line at Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, across from the high school,

about one hour after the 12:30 p.m. start. Course maps will be available in the high-school gymnasium from 10 a.m. to noon the day of the race.

LAST YEAR, a late-spring blizzard in April 7 forced race officials to reschedule the event for the following weekend. Runners often have had to suck stiff winds and cold temperatures in the event, which steadily has gained popularity despite the variable weather.

In 1981, Mark Mesler set the record for the course with a 1:08:18 time. Last year, Larry Fisher of Pontiac came through the chute with the winning 1:10:54 time. The first 750 runners to finish the race receive customized medalion key chains, and the top finishers in each of 10 categories receive awards.

Every runner who registers for the

race by Friday, April 6 will be guaranteed a long-sleeved T-shirt with the half-marathon logo. The registration fee through April 15 is \$8. Those who register after April 15 will pay \$14, and the race committee can't guarantee late registrants will get a T-shirt in their size.

RUNNERS MAY call West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation at 334-5660 for race information. To receive an application form with a map of the course, send a stamped self-addressed envelope to: West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation, 3325 Middlebelt, West Bloomfield 48093.

For safety and convenience, a pace car will lead runners around the course. Markers along the route will designate every mile to help runners pace themselves.



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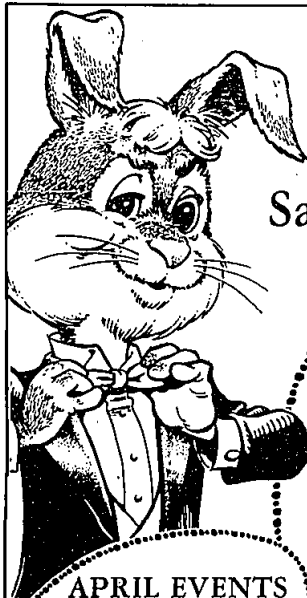
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7-Spring Fashion Show

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25-29 Raab Craft Show

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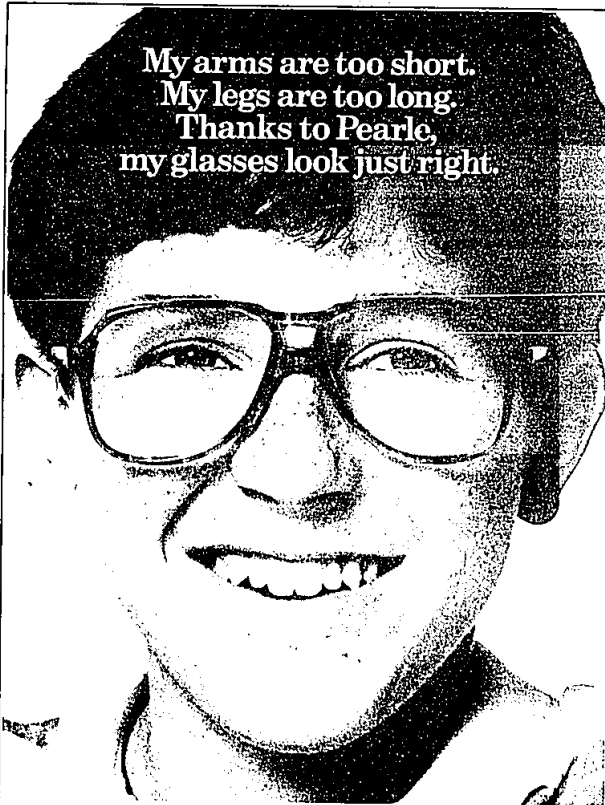
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