

HERAITY Lifestyles

Weekly workouts, nicknames and the value of having each other's backs

By ELAINE HESSER

IF WE learned nothing else from Covid-19, it's that man does not live by solo walks alone — even along the most beautiful stretches of beaches and forested trails imaginable.

That's where F3 Nation comes in. Started in Charlotte, N.C., in 2011, F3 stands for fitness, fellowship and faith. The organization — for men only — is quick to note that faith doesn't mean a specific church or a religion, but “a belief in something outside oneself.” According to its website, it offers more than 3,500 free outdoor boot-camp-style weekly workouts in at least 30 states.

Four groups meet on the Peninsula — Monday at Del Monte Beach in Monterey, Tuesday at Lincoln Park in East Garrison (near Marina), Wednesday on Congress near P.G. high (all at 6 a.m.), and Saturday, 7 a.m., at Carmel High School.

Chris Kramer, a respiratory therapist from Pacific Grove, has been working out with F3 most of this year, since he made a New Year's resolution to become more physically fit. He said he found the group through Meetup, a social media platform that helps folks to meet new people with similar interests.

Kramer said before turning to F3, he'd tried gym memberships, but, “They seemed overpriced, and I didn't use them as much. I'd end up canceling them.” He said he found a “brotherhood” in F3. “When men are younger, they form close bonds through high school and college years, but then they get busy with jobs and families. We all need other people to rely on and count on.”

The workouts are scheduled early to accommodate members' job schedules and make sure that they can have “family time” at home after work. Kramer said participants range from 30 to 60 years old, although there are no



Members of F3 Nation gather for fitness, fellowship and faith at several local spots. They also meet up for hikes and bike rides.



to do it in isolation.”

Building strong community bonds and developing leadership are at the core of the F3 philosophy. Kramer said that members are encouraged to “Q,” or lead a session (the letter is used as a noun and a verb) after they've been there a while, but no one is forced to do so. The website (F3nation.com) offers plenty of guidance, along with a lexicon and an “exticon” (for exercises) to decipher the group's copious jargon.

There are dozens of opaque exercise names, like Chilly Jack, Groiner, and Agassis — those are done on

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