

The Pacesetter

A quarterly publication of the **Prairie Striders**



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50 years of running together Striders to mark golden anniversary

By **Andrea Schmidt**
Special to the Pacesetter

Whether you are a member of Prairie Striders or someone who just enjoys running, if you raced in the Brookings Marathon or jogged the Hobo Day 5K for fun, you have been part of the Prairie Striders experience.

No matter how Prairie Striders has influenced your life, your invited to celebrate the club's 50th anniversary after the Jackrabbit 15 Saturday, Sept. 28. The festivities begin at 11 a.m. at the South Dakota Art Museum just north of the finish line at SDSU's Coughlin Campanile.

The anniversary party will feature SDSU ice cream, cake and door prizes. At 11:45 a.m., a program will feature Prairie Striders leaders from yesterday and today. Dellas Cole, of Brookings Radio, will be emcee for panelists:

- Bob Bartling, charter member and first president
- Jay Dirksen, club founder
- Lou Eggebraaten, first female president
- Tom Bezdicheck, past president
- Matt Bien, past president, marathon director since 2007
- Shari Landmark, past president and longtime race director

Prairie Striders: Heart and soul of Brookings running

Prairie Striders started with just 10 runners on Sept. 12, 1969, in the basement of the Barn on the South Dakota State University campus. It was the brainchild of then SDSU track coach Jay Dirksen to promote running and jogging for fun, fitness and fellowship.

The first president was the indomitable Bob Bartling, who at age 93, is still an active member and the club librarian.

In the early days of Prairie Striders, runners were still an oddity in Brookings. There were only 10 original members – some young, serious runners, and others that would run in alleys or at night to avoid drivers who weren't used to them on the roadways.



50 years - big changes

Today, there are 259 members who hail from Brookings to Beaverton, Oregon. Most are from South Dakota, but you can find Prairie Striders in 20 states and one Canadian province. The group organizes 11 racing events – from one mile to a marathon – and social runs throughout the year.

Among those races is the Jackrabbit 15, a race that's even older than Prairie Striders. Again, we can thank the SDSU cross country team for beginning this tradition. The Jack 15 is a 15.2-mile race from White to the Campanile. It was first run by the 1963 cross country team as a training run. Today, it's the oldest road race in the Midwest. This year's 57th running precedes the anniversary party.

The relationship between Prairie Striders at the SDSU cross country and track teams is still very healthy. Club members often volunteer at meets, and the Striders have even purchased team equipment.

The club also funds a scholarship each year for an SDSU distance runner. Now called the Prairie Striders/Phil LaVallee Memorial Scholarship, the club undertook a fundraising drive to further endow the scholarship in recognition of Prairie Striders' golden anniversary. The final total on the drive to \$75,000 will be announced at the anniversary party.

Get involved!

It is very easy to get involved in Prairie Striders. The yearly dues are still just \$5. Members receive a quarterly newsletter and provide support to the local running community.

If you know someone who wants to join Prairie Striders before the big celebration, go to www.prairiestriders.net, and click on "join the club" in the upper righthand corner.

50th anniversary party

Saturday, Sept. 28, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

South Dakota Art Museum on campus

Treats: SDSU ice cream, cake, nuts, drinks

Door prizes: Prairie Striders shirts, socks, 2019 marathon glasses, Hobo Day mugs

Attire: Vintage apparel from Prairie Striders races (optional)



Prairie Striders formed in 1969 and started staging races shortly thereafter. It now sponsors 11 races plus a social

run. One of its most popular is the Hobo Day 5K, shown here in 2015. This year's event is Oct. 5.

Still running? Yes, but with a new focus

By Emily Berzonsky

Editor's note: Emily Berzonsky is a May graduate of SDSU who has written previously for the Pacesetter and even served as editor for an issue. She will still show up at occasional area races and, we hope, continue to produce occasional columns for the Pacesetter.

This fall marks the first time in 10 years that I will not be competing with a cross country team as my four years of eligibility at SDSU has run out.

I've spent a lot of time this summer grappling with how I want to "rebrand" myself as a runner. I've fielded a lot of questions as of late about "what are you doing now that you're graduated?" I've had an equal if not greater number of friends ask me "still running? What's the next race for you?"

The questions about my career and running future seem to go hand in hand, although not surprisingly since running became a part of my identity over the years.

My answer is "yes, I'm still running," and I go on to ramble about the races I'm thinking about doing. But I've also been adding, "I'm returning to running for the love of it." Not to say that I ever fell out of love with running, but it developed into a bit of an obsession.

Over the past 10 years, I've taken only a handful of breaks from running. I held the fear that if I don't run one day, I will lose a noticeable amount of fitness. I needed to run every day.

A few things happened to me this summer that allowed me to step back from the obsession.

First, the website I was using to log my training stopped being free. Being cheap like I am, I stopped logging my miles.

Second, I lost my Garmin watch. After a big search and the watch not turning up, I resorted to either running with my

"I'm ready to just enjoy the ride and fully embrace the identity not of an intense retired athlete, but of a girl who likes to run."

Apple watch or running just for time (I have my Apple watch set to show only time and distance, but the distance is only to the tenth decimal, not the one hundredth).

Third, I had some highs and lows in road races. I did a few in hopes of being competitive, getting a good time, and potentially collecting some prize money (since I'm no longer restricted from doing so by the NCAA); however, I often didn't run as well as I anticipated.

I did a few other races "just for fun" and they really were fun! I enjoyed the courses, raced with friends, and to my surprise, often placed and got the prize money.

And finally, the icing on the cake: I got my first-ever stress fracture. I currently have a boot on my left foot and won't be able to run until the end of September at the earliest.

I'm taking it as a sign that I'm not as adept at self-training as I thought I would be after 10 years of following training plans from my coaches.

Prior to the events of this summer, I'd



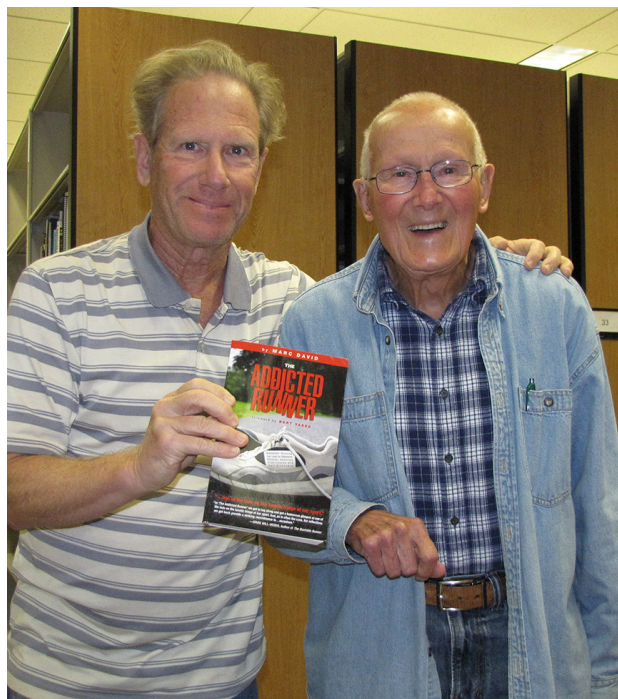
Emily Berzonsky, shown competing in the 2019 Beef and Eggs 5K, will resume running for the Lincoln Running Club when her stress fracture heals. But the 2019 SDSU grad also will be running with a new attitude.

joined a competitive running club and set some goals for the coming year of running. I want to lift more, have a good showing in the SDSU alumni races, complete my first marathon, and maybe even qualify for Boston.

My goals have not changed, but my outlook on reaching them has. I don't feel guilty about taking one or two days off in a week.

I don't feel anxious about going for runs with friends who run a slower pace than me. I'm ready to run how far I want, when I want in pursuit of the runner's high.


I'm ready to just enjoy the ride and fully embrace the identity not of an intense retired athlete, but of a girl who likes to run.



It was a great experience being a part of Jack 15 last year! I've enjoyed the years of running different Prairie Striders events. Prairie Striders has provided well organized events, and has a lot of potential in what the organization can do for Brookings area! — **Trevor Capra**, 2017 SDSU grad who won the 2018 Jack 15 in 1:28:14

Prairie Striders
officers
2019-20

President — Dave Graves
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Marc David, left, presents a copy of his book "The Addicted Runner" to Prairie Striders librarian Bob Bartling during a visit to Brookings June 12. David, 37, of Phoenix, Arizona, considers himself to be an evangelist of running and has run every day since 1983.

ARCfit leads surge in Jack 15 entries



Posing before a Tuesday evening track workout are ARCfit relay team members, from left, Bridget Laleman, Jennifer Gross, Jennifer Cunningham, Marie Hoese, Becca Foerster,

Nate Hilbrands, Miranda Hilbrands and their children, Steve Harris, Darcy Vincent, Kim Koch, Devan and Brock Landmark.

By Dave Graves
Newsletter editor

Relay participation in this year's Jack 15 is at a record pace with 40 teams signed up as of Sept. 11 — just over two weeks before the race. The past peak was 37 teams in 2017.

A big reason for the increase is the registration of *nine* teams from ARCfit, a Brookings fitness boutique started Jan. 12, 2018, by Amber Carda. "Our passion is to support local events and when you do things in teams you're more likely to get people out of their comfort zone," said Carda, who has been a long-time runner.

One of her fitness center coaches is Prairie Strider Becca Foerster, who was a record setter when she ran at South Dakota State University.

Carda "blames" Foerster for the ARCfit relay explosion. Foerster coaches the fitness center's Fast 40 indoor running class, which involves treadmill running and other workout sessions. The Saturday morning class is intended for people who don't think they are runners, Foerster said. Some workouts are based on time, others on distance.

In addition, some ARCfit coaches and members meet for a 2- to 3-mile warmup run before, including the 5 a.m. classes, Carda said.

With that core group, Foerster decided to use the camaraderie of a relay team to get others involved in running. The training has included Tuesday evening track workouts at Brookings High School. They do things like sprinting up the ladder, beginning at 100 meters and going to 800 or 1,200 meters depending on one's running experience.

There have been at least 30 participants with five of them nonmembers. "It's amazing how many nonmembers are joining the track workouts,"

Foerster said.

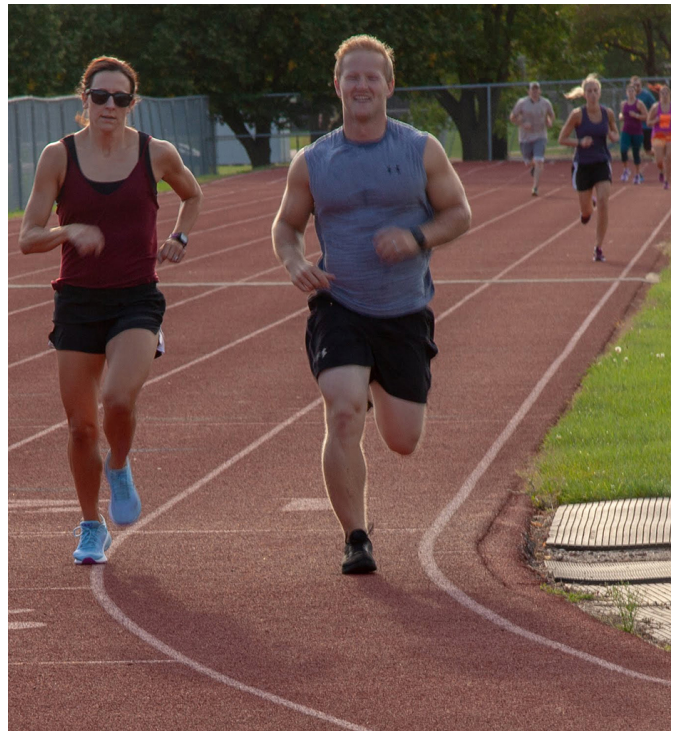
Among them are four male coworkers of Susan Robertson from UPS. "The track workouts create good camaraderie," Foerster said.

Another track workout participant is Miranda Hilbrands, who is running the Jack 15 with her husband, Nate, a Brookings dentist. She has run a handful of 5Ks, the 2017 Fargo Half Marathon and the Jack 15 relay a few years ago. However, this is the first time to run a relay with her husband. Their goal is simply to say "We did it."

Grandma and Grandpa will have their children (ages 4 and 1) along the course, which runs from White to the Campanile in Brookings.

Neither Miranda or Nate Hilbrands were runners in high school. Track workouts have been a new and pleasant experience for Miranda. "I like the sprints and pushing yourself." Nate's training partner has been the family's Labrador, so after Nate and Miranda have each logged 7.6 miles Sept. 28, they will be able to compare training practices.'

The Jack 15 does offer prizes for the top team in each relay category (5 x 3



Becca Foerster and Nate Hilbrands pace one another during a track workout at Brookings High School Sept. 10. Foerster, an instructor at ARCfit, organized the group track workouts in advance of the Jack 15. The gym has nine relay teams entered in the Sept. 28 race and one man running all the way.

miles, 3 x 5 miles and 2 x 7.6 miles for male, female and coed teams).

However, Carda said there is no challenge among the nine ARCfit relay teams. "This is team friendly. We do other challenges throughout the year, but when it comes to running we're all in that together. There will be a big party at the end. This is to show anyone can be a runner, you just have to step out of that box," Carda said.

Miranda Hilbrands added, the intimidation that running can bring some people has been conquered. "Everybody is really getting excited for it."

Member Spotlight

Editor's note: *Member Spotlight is a regular feature in the Pacesetter. If you, or someone you know, would like to be featured, please contact Dave Graves at 605-627-5718 or run@prairiestriders.net.*



Kevin Bjerke



Age: 36
Residence: Billings, Mont.
Occupation: NCAA Women's Triathlon Coach, Montana State Billings
Family: none
Years as a Prairie Strider member: 15

Note: Kevin is co-director of the Beef and Eggs 5K, held the second Saturday of July.

Why you're a member: I was still in college competing for Coach (Rod) DeHaven, (and just one year after Coach (Paul) Danger's departure...talk about some outstanding coaches) when I became a Striders member, mainly so we could attach our road race (Beef and Eggs 5k) to the Prairie Striders organization. I am still grateful that the group allowed Ryan (Egeberg) and I that convenience as snot-nosed younglings.

But even before that, ever since joining the Jackrabbits, I felt a connection to the club. The operation being run out of Bartling's basement shoe store had a certain allure to it. The old-school library, retro apparel (not sure if Bob realized at the time how retro much of his inventory was), and the overall ambiance of that basement had some mythical connection to the entire U.S. running craze of the '70s and '80s.



Adrienne McEntee

Age: 47
Residence: Brookings
Occupation: Preschool teacher
Family: 12-year-old daughter, Tatum
Years as a Prairie Strider member: around 7

Why you're a member: It is a simple way to give back to the running community

here in Brookings

What you enjoy about running: It is just something I love to

I immediately felt like I was a part of that craze every time I walked down that narrow staircase, despite being just a toddler as that era of running came to a close.

After graduation, I continued competing in road races for several years in the Prairie Striders singlet, and remain a member not just because of our race, but also to support the Striders overall mission of promoting running throughout the region.

What you enjoy about running: Simplicity. I don't think I would have gotten into triathlons if it weren't for a never-ending string of injuries. The simplicity of running is so freeing, especially in this technology age.

Favorite running memory: Oh boy. Absolutely impossible to narrow that down to just one. Overall I would have to simply say the companionship that accompanies running. Even though I don't compete much anymore, I love seeing everyone come back and race the Beef and Eggs 5k, and enjoy meeting up with friends and groups for runs.

Your favorite Prairie Striders race: Well, of course, Beef and Eggs! I've done part of Jack 15, a leg on the marathon, Arbor Day, Hobo Day, and the Longest Day. They're all great, but I have an unfair bias to Beef and Eggs.

Favorite workout: In college, 1500s at Edgebrook for cross country. Hands down. Post-college (when I was healthy) I really enjoyed long runs in the 2-hour/18-mile range. Currently enjoying exploring the different mountain passes on my bike around my new home in Montana.

Your running goal: Get healthy enough to race again. I haven't competed since 2015 and it is driving me nuts. I'd like to compete in a half-ironman (full is a bit too crazy for me) and do a full marathon again at some point.

do, gives me an opportunity to boost my mood or I can wind down with a nice evening run.

Favorite running memory: Doing the Louisville Half Marathon. Running through Churchill Downs was spectacular.

Your favorite Prairie Striders race: That is such a tough question to answer! I will admit, even though I do not prefer winter training runs, it's the local Brookings Marathon. I just love how the town comes alive for this event.

Favorite workout: The long run!

Your running goal: To qualify for the Boston Marathon.

Teen's 1999 marathon lark becomes his passion

By Jordan Smith
Runner's World magazine

Justin Gillette got his start running marathons thanks to the Y2K hysteria. Now, he's won 100 marathons and run countless others.

He broke the tape for the 100th time on March 23 at the Quarter Horse Marathon in Richmond, Kentucky, finishing in 3:03:42.

This particular race appealed to him because the course was multiple loops, which meant his four kids could watch him run by more than once.

Calling from his home in Goshen, Indiana, the 36-year-old told Runner's World that he trains with a cheap watch from Walmart and wears Nike Air Zoom Pegasus shoes. The only running-related

data he tracks is the date he starts running in his shoes, which he writes on the shoe with a permanent marker. He gets a new pair about every five weeks.

His passion for running marathons started when some people thought the world was going to end on Jan. 1, 2000.

At the time, Gillette wanted to be sure to get a marathon checked off his bucket list just in case the apocalypse happened. So, as a somewhat impulsive and determined 16-year-old, he skipped class with his friend, drove from his hometown of Ironton, Missouri, to Wynne, Arkansas, and lined up to run the Midsouth Championship Marathon on Nov. 20, 1999.

The friends decided it was going to be a weekend of firsts: their first time skipping school, their first time eating frog

legs, and their first marathon. After that experience, Gillette decided it wouldn't be his last marathon, either—he just kept running.

The following year, he went back and ran that same marathon, during which he qualified for Boston. He ran the Boston Marathon as a senior in high school.

He went on to run at Goshen College in Goshen, Indiana, where athletes could specialize in running marathons. "They had the marathon as an event, so that's why I picked that level of school. I wanted to run marathon in college," Gillette told Runner's World.

Once he graduated in 2005, he kept running marathons. Gillette has run so many marathons that he has lost count, but he said it is about 180.