

# The Pacesetter

A quarterly publication of the **Prairie Striders**



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## A golden gathering



Photo by Jon Sprang

Bob Bartling, 93, center, spins a tale about the early days of the club during the 50th anniversary gathering at the South Dakota Art Museum Sept. 28, 2019. He is flanked by club

founder and former SDSU track coach Jay Dirksen, left, and Lou Eggebraaten, first female president in 1980-81. In the background is current president Dave Graves.

**By Dave Graves**  
Newsletter editor

Tales swirled like a prairie breeze as a mix of Prairie Striders members gathered to observe the 50th anniversary of the first running club to be formed in South Dakota.

South Dakota State University track and cross country coach Jay Dirksen called the club's first meeting on Sept. 12, 1969, in the basement of the Barn on the SDSU campus. Coach was surrounded by a group of 10 who shared his interest in organizing a club that would promote running and organize races, which were almost unheard of then.

The golden anniversary gathering was Sept. 28, following the 57th running of the Jack 15, in the South Dakota Art Museum auditorium, which is just west of the Barn.

On hand for that very first gathering were Bob Bartling, his brother, Lorne; Bruce Berger, a Brookings High School cross country runner; Dirksen, John Iverson, an SDSU freshman; Chuck McMullen, an SDSU faculty member; Keith Morrill, Harvey Mills and Grant Peterson, Russ Strande, the BHS cross country coach; and Scott Underwood, an SDSU freshman.

On hand for the anniversary were Bob Bartling, Dirksen, Iverson and Strande. Representing Lorne Bartling were his children, Dick Bartling and Becky Bray. Mills was represented by his son, John and grandson Jacob.

Also on hand were Jim and Pat Egeberg, of Valley City, N.D. Jim, a member of the SDSU cross country team, attended the club's second meeting. In 1974 Pat Welch and Ruth Rehn became the first females to finish the Jack 15 road race. Another longtime club member at the gathering was Jim Pedley of Martinez, Calif.

### Stories from the early days

In addition to casual conversation, there was a Q&A with panelists Bartling, Dirksen, Eggebraaten, Tom Bezdichek, Matt Bien and Shari Landmark.

Dellas Cole, sports director for Brookings Radio and a race volunteer during the 1980s, elicited numerous stories from the panelists, including a recounting of the very first

marathon to be staged in South Dakota. The Longest Day Marathon was run June 21, 1970, in 75-degree heat and 70% humidity, beginning at 5 p.m. on a Sunday.

Dirksen, the race winner in 2:50:22, freely admits "we didn't know what we were doing...I never walked so much in a race in my life."

Obviously, the club figured some things out through the years. Bezdichek recalled that his years as president included the state's centennial (1989). He organized the Lewis and Clark Run, which followed the explorers' route along the Missouri River from Yankton to Mobridge. He had to organize a group of runners for each city the run passed through.



Dellas Cole serves as emcee for the panel discussion at the 50th.

### Outmanned and he didn't know it

Bartling told the story of a different relay.

Hilton Briggs, president of SDSU from 1958 to 1975, was an avid fitness advocate who organized a 15-person relay team for the Jack 15 in the mid-1960s. He arranged for a flatbed with hay bales to transport his team from mile to mile. Briggs had the opening mile and eyed Ron Daws on the starting line. The competitive Briggs went out with the lead pack.

He didn't realize Daws was an Olympic Marathon Trials qualifier. He just figured he could surely run for one mile against a guy was going to run 15 miles.

Briggs did make a game effort against Daws, who gave the president a "who's this guy" look and eventually dropped his challenger. The heavily huffing Briggs had to be pulled onto the flatbed when his mile was up, recalled Bartling.

# Scholarship drive hits goal

\$75,000!

That's how much Prairie Striders members needed to amass in order to hit its stretch goal of eventually providing a scholarship of \$3,000 per year for an SDSU track/cross country athlete.

As announced by club President Dave Graves at the Striders' 50th anniversary gathering Sept. 26, the club hit that mark right on the dot.

In 2018, the club was brainstorming ways to mark the club's 50th anniversary on Sept. 12, 2019. Longtime member Chuck Tiltrum suggested increasing the \$33,000 endowment for the SDSU Prairie Striders/Phil LaVallee Scholarship to \$50,000. At that point, the endowment was producing a \$1,000 scholarship and had been presented since 2014.

Not far into the fund drive, a goal-blasting donation was received from longtime Strider Harvey Mills. The \$20,000 gift from the now 93-year-old former construction company owner prompted Strider leaders to set a new goal — \$75,000. A \$215 check that arrived in late August meant the goal had been reached with a month to spare.

While the fund drive had a couple \$1,000 gifts and several for \$500 or more, the vast majority were for \$100 or less, club Treasurer Jay Larsen said. There were a total of 119 donors.

## Harvey Mills honored

Mills, now living at the Neighborhoods in Brookings, was unable to attend, but was represented at the anniversary party by his son, John, and a grandson, Jacob.

John Mills, who logged one Jack 15 in 1971, said that was enough to convince the 16-year-old that distance running wasn't in his future. However, his dad ran eight Jack 15s (best time 1:33:29) and six Longest Day Marathons (best time 2:52:38) as well as a couple Boston Marathons and an untold number of Sunday morning 20-milers with fellow Striders.

"Dad appreciated the support of Prairie Striders and what running meant to his life. He was happy to support Prairie Striders in this effort and thank them for continuing a great running tradition in Brookings," John Mills said.

## Scholarship history

The Prairie Striders Scholarship was created Feb. 13, 2008, with a goal of making annual donations of at least \$500 to create a \$10,000 endowment.

It became the Prairie Striders/Phil LaVallee Memorial Scholarship in 2013 after the Aug. 8, 2013, death of SDSU cross country runner Phil LaVallee. A memorial one-mile run at the SDSU Classic on Oct. 4, 2013, generated \$8,000 — a generous amount from the

200 participants but not enough to endow its own scholarship.

So funds were combined and by the end of fiscal year 2014 (June 30), there was a \$20,000 endowment.

"To see that fund grow nearly four-fold in just five years in a remarkable testament to the generosity of our members, many who no longer even live in the Brookings area," Graves said.

## Need for support remains

In an email message, the LaVallee family, of Ostego, Minn., said, "Phillip loved SDSU and was very proud to be a Jackrabbit. We are so grateful for the generosity and support of the Prairie Striders, the Jackrabbit families and the entire SDSU community in creating this legacy to honor Phil and keep his spirit alive at SDSU!"

While not in an active fundraising campaign, the club continues to bolster the fund. Many Prairie Strider races make an annual contribution to the scholarship, some runners make contributions when signing up to run in a Prairie Striders race, and the scholarship is the primarily beneficiary of the Jack 15, which this year donated \$2,000.

"In order for the scholarship to keep pace with the growing cost of a college education, we need to continue growing the value of the endowment," Graves said.

## 50th: Memorable gear part of the memories

Continued from Page 1

### An unexpected bed-and-breakfast guest

The tales continued through 2019 events.

Bien, director of the Brookings Marathon, as the Longest Day Marathon now is known, recalled a conversation with Kenya native Geoffrey Terer at the packet pickup for the 50th running of the event May 11. "Did you find a place to stay?" Bien casually asked Terer, now of Colorado Springs, when they met after first connecting by phone a week prior.

Terer, who had run the Lincoln Marathon the week before, said no, that he planned to sleep in his car.

Showing South Dakota kindness, Bien insisted that Terer spend the night at the Bien household. The guest bed must be comfortable. Terer, 42, topped the field of 188 and set a master's course record with a time of 2:30:47, which was the fastest time since Randy Fischer's second Brookings Marathon win Nov. 1, 1981 (2:24:35, 5:28 pace). Terer ran at 5:46.

The effort did tire out Terer. He spent a quiet Saturday night at the Biens as well before heading home.

### Another reason to smile

Among the lighter moments was some of the vintage Prairie Striders apparel that panelists and others donned.

Landmark sported the camouflage green Garry Bentley 20K shirt, a long-abandoned Striders race; Bien had the black 40th anniversary pullover from the Brookings Marathon; current president Dave Graves unearthed a mesh white Prairie Striders singlet; and Bezdichek sported the windbreaker that he and all race directors wore during the 1980s and '90s.

But the showstopper had to be the snazzy Jackrabbit socks worn by the dapper Bezdichek.



Tom Bezdichek's Jackrabbit socks may not have stole the show but they certainly made an impression at the club's 50th anniversary gathering at the South Dakota Art Museum auditorium Sept. 26.



**ABOVE:** John Mills extends wishes from scholarship benefactor Harvey Mills, his father.

**LEFT:** Scholarship recipient Oksana Covey, a middle distance runner, shares her story at the 50th.

### **Prairie Striders/Phil LaVallee Memorial Scholarship recipients**

**2019-20:** Oksana Covey, junior early childhood education major from Ankeny, Iowa

**2018-19:** Emily Berzonsky (now a first-year Master of Public Health student University Nebraska Medical Center)

**2017-18:** Emily Berzonsky

**2016-17:** Emily Berzonsky

**2015-16:** Connor Branick (now a third-year medical student at University of Nebraska Medical Center)

**2014-15:** Laura Lawton (Phil LaVallee's cousin, now a hospice nurse case manager in Sioux Falls)



## *From* Longest Day *to* Brookings Marathon

*50 YEARS OF RUNNING  
BROOKINGS, SOUTH DAKOTA*

We're excited to announce the upcoming release of our new Brookings Marathon history book.

With 370 pages of stories, photos and statistics, the book provides a complete history of the race since it began in 1970.

If you've run the Longest Day/ Brookings Marathon over the past 50 years, your name appears at least twice!

The book will be available for purchase soon. If you would like to be notified when the book is for sale, go here to put your name on the wait list:

<http://www.brookingsmarathon.com/history-book.html>

### **What others are saying:**

"I've never been so impressed with a book as I am with that one. It's unbelievable."

Bob Bartling

Club librarian & legend

What a wonderful book! There is SO much good information. You should be very proud of the finished product.

Jay Dirksen

Club and marathon founder

# 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.*



## Lori Bocklund

**Age:** 58

**Residence:** Beaverton, Ore.

**Occupation:** Consultant and Business Owner

**Family:** Husband, Mike Mulligan

**Years as a Prairie Strider member:** 40 I think (I believe I joined in 1979)

**Why you're a member:** My memories of Brookings and SDSU are so wonderful, and so attached to running. Supporting the Prairie Striders is a nice connection to that community of runners.

**What you enjoy about running:** I love the quiet, the thinking time and how I feel during and after (when nothing is hurting!). And I love the portability of running. As one of my poems shows, I have run all over the world (on every continent except Antarctica!).

**Favorite running memory:** I can't say I have one — there are so many! The first time I ran for an hour was amazing and is depicted in my other poem. My greatest race memories are when our SDSU women won the nationals (1980 and 1981). But my mind is full of memories of wonderful runs, from reunions with my teammates to half marathons to the scenes depicted in my travel poem.



Bocklund running in Antigua

**Your favorite Prairie Striders race:** I don't have one and am not even sure I ever ran one. But I have always been proud of what you do!

**Favorite workout:** I used to love Fartlek. These days a run in the woods is a highlight.

**Your running goal:** Stay healthy — run as long as my knees, hips and feet will let me.

## Kalyn Gutormson



**Age:** 50+

**Residence:** Bruce

**Occupation:** Genetics lab manager/agronomist with SoDak Labs, Brookings.

**Family:** Husband - Tim; five children - Kyle Gutormson, Kurt Gutormson, Jensina Davis, Kaden Gutormson, Martin Davis

**Years as a Prairie Strider member:** 1

**Why you're a member:** I have run in most of the Prairie Striders races and know many of the members. It is great to have so many races to choose from throughout the year in our community.

**What you enjoy about running:** Running helps me maintain my health.

**Favorite running memory:** Finishing my first half marathon (Leading Ladies 2009) with my kids at the finish line for me!

**Your favorite Prairie Striders race:** Brookings Half Marathon. It's great to see everyone in the community help out to welcome runners and visitors to Brookings. I have friends from Minneapolis area that come nearly every year to run and I always meet them at the finish line, even without seeing them anywhere on the course.

**Your running goal:** Complete one half marathon a year and be able to hike, bike and enjoy life the rest of the year!

# Larsen tabbed for high school officiating award



Long-time Prairie Striders member and current club treasurer Jay Larsen was honored for his contributions to high school officiating.

At halftime of the Nov. 15 Brookings Bobcats state championship football game at SDSU's Dana J. Dykhouse Stadium, Larsen was presented the Doug Koester Award by the South Dakota High School Officials Association. Named after the late Pierre official, the Koester Award recognizes the contributions officials make to high school sports and their community.

Larsen has been a high school official

since 1970, when he started officiating football and basketball in Minnesota.

He continued officiating when he moved to South Dakota in 1977, making this season his 50th year of officiating. Larsen has recruited and mentored more than 70 officials by working with college students who had an interest in officiating. He also served as a regional football officiating coordinator for many years.

After retiring as financial aid director at South Dakota State University in 2013, Larsen added officiating baseball, track and field and cross country to his existing commitments of football and boys and girls basketball.

The list of volunteer activities for Larsen is as long as his officiating

resume.

Since 1981, he has been the scoreboard operator/timer for SDSU football and men's basketball games as well as a track and field official. He also is a certified official with USA Track and Field and a member of the Brookings Park and Recreation Board. He also volunteers with Special Olympics, Boys & Girls Club, the Michael J. Entringer Scholarship Classic and area youth sports and college events.

He has been active in competitive distance running for more than 50 years. His 13 finishes in the Jack 15 Road Race ranks ninth all time.

Larsen and his wife of 44 years, Kathy, have two children, Jennifer and Katie, and four grandchildren.

# If Santa had a workshop for runners

**Editor's note:** Compiled and designed by Emily Berzonsky, a May graduate of SDSU and frequent Pacesetter contributor.

Although running is often my log off, power down, and recharge time, my runs almost always involve one or more gadgets/accessories before, during, and after. Those of us who run in all seasons—whether outside or on the treadmill, especially can't avoid turning to gear for help with safety and motivation.

For those looking to purchase new gear for themselves or others this holiday season, I've created a list of my recommendations based on my favorite gear and reviews/comments from some runner friends:

<p><b>Balega Hidden Comfort Running Socks \$13</b> These are my favorite running socks. They keep my feet cool and dry, and have saved me from many blisters. They are sturdy; I've gotten years of use out of one pair. Bonus that they're no show!</p>	<p>"Right amount of cushion and a good fit."</p>	
	<p><b>LED Shoe Clip Lights \$10</b> These are my go-to for safety while running in the dark. They are easy to take on and off your shoe, and you forget they're there while you're running. They flash with each step, making it look like you have light-up shoes. I've heard "sweet shoes" more than once while out running with these.</p>	
<p><b>Koala Clip \$29</b> I have not personally tried this product, but I like the idea and am excited to try it! With cell phones getting bigger, I no longer want to have my phone strapped to my arm or in a carrier around my waist.</p>	<p>"...for my phone when I want to listen to music and not have my phone bounce around."</p>	
	<p><b>Aftershokz Sportz Titanium \$40</b> Multiple friends recommended these headphones. They transmit sound differently; transducers send mini vibrations through the cheekbones and deliver sound directly to the inner ear, bypassing the eardrum. This technology allows runners to also hear their surroundings.</p>	<p>"...so I can hear my surroundings."</p>
<p><b>Amazfit Bip \$68</b> According to my dad, this is the best gadget if you're looking for an activity tracker that is lighter and cheaper than the Garmin. It has all the basic tracking features you could want in addition to a high-quality touch screen.</p>		
	<p><b>Noxgear Tracer360 \$70</b> If you're looking for more than the LED shoe clip, I'd suggest Noxgear. I've done many runs with 605 Running Company member Tessa Stoltenburg while she sports the Tracer 360. It is very bright, seems unrestricted, and it has a variety of fun color options!</p>	<p>"Almost all of my runs during the fall and winter are in the dark, so it is important that I am visible to traffic and other pedestrians."</p>
<p><b>Nike Air Zoom Pegasus 36 \$120</b> This shoe is next on my list to try! I know many a runner who have praised the Pegasus as a great medium support shoe.</p>	<p>"No greater trainer has ever been constructed."  "I've been running in Peg's for years and they are such a reliable neutral training shoe. I am typically able to get between 200-300 miles on each pair fairly easily."</p>	

## 2020 race schedule



- Prairie Striders Indoor 5k ..... Saturday, Jan. 25
- Frostbite Frolic ..... Saturday, Feb. 15
- Arbor Day 5k ..... Friday, April 24
- "I'm Ready for Summer" Triathlon .... Sat., April 25
- Scotty Roberts 5k ..... Friday, May 15
- Brookings Marathon, Half & Relays ... Sat., May 16
- Longest Day 10K .....Saturday, June 20
- Beef and Eggs 5K ..... Saturday, July 11
- Predictor Mile ..... Wednesday, Aug. 5
- Oakwood Lakes Trail Run ..... Saturday, Aug. 8
- Jack 15 ..... Saturday, Sept. 26/Oct. 3
- Hobo Day 5K ..... Saturday, Oct. 31

# Lowery becomes Jackrabbit Hall of Famer



Former Jackrabbit Brad Lowery runs the 2019 Beef and Eggs with his son. Lowery, 36, of Sioux Falls, finished in 21:06, which was third in his age division. There was no stroller division.

Prairie Strider Brad Lowery was among six inductees to the Jackrabbit Hall of Fame Nov. 9. It is the largest class in the hall's 53-year history and brings the total to 95 honorees.

Lowery, now a faculty member in the University Sioux Falls math department, won a combined six individual North Central Conference titles and helped lead the Jackrabbit men's cross country program through a successful transition into Division I during a standout career from 2001-05.

On the track, the Pierre native claimed the mile run at the NCC Indoor Track and Field Championships three consecutive years from 2002-04 and set the league record in the event in 2004 with a time of 4 minutes, 6.53 seconds, while going on to earn All-America honors with a fifth-place finish.

He added another league title in the 3,000-meter run at the 2004 indoor meet and won the 5,000-meter run at the 2003 NCC outdoor championships.

Lowery continues to hold the SDSU indoor record for the 3,000-meter run (8:05.04) and held the outdoor record in the 5,000 meters (14:00.24) from 2005-17. He placed eighth in the indoor mile run at the 2005 USA Indoor Championships and later won both the

1,500- and 5,000-meter runs outdoors at the Drake Relays that same year.

On May 6, 2005, he attempted to become the first South Dakotan to run a four-minute mile in South Dakota. At a special event at the Howard Wood Dakota Relays, Lowery set a state and school record (4:01.67), but just missed his goal.

In cross country, Lowery ran his way to the 2003 NCC individual title as the Jackrabbits ended their conference affiliation at the Division II level with their third consecutive team title.

He would go on to earn All-America honors for the second year in a row with a 10th-place finish at the NCAA Division II Championships, following a 15th-place effort in 2002.

After taking a redshirt year, Lowery marked his return to the cross country lineup in 2005 by winning the individual title at the 2005 Division I Independent Cross Country Championships as the Jackrabbits earned the team title.

Lowery also was honored for his academic work by earning Academic All-America recognition two times and by receiving an NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship. He has a Ph.D. from the University of Colorado-Denver.

## SDSU presents Ginn coaching award to Iverson

Longtime Brookings coach and educator John Iverson, who is a charter member of Prairie Striders Running Club, was the 2019 recipient of the Ralph Ginn Award for Coaching Excellence by South Dakota State University. He was honored in conjunction with Jackrabbit Sports Hall of Fame induction ceremonies Nov. 9.

A Brookings native, Iverson joined the Brookings School District in 1973, following his graduation from SDSU. He taught science and math at the middle and high schools for 33 years, while also coaching basketball, cross country and track and field.

Iverson served as a coach at Brookings High School for 90 sport seasons, likely influencing more student-athletes than any coach in the history of Bobcat sports. His coaching résumé includes 10 years as head cross country coach, 32 years as an assistant boys' basketball coach, 22 years as an assistant girls' basketball coach and 26 years as an assistant track and field coach.

The Jackrabbit Sports Hall of Fame 2019 class is made up of: Paul Konechne (wrestling); Brad Lowery (cross country/track and field); Melissa Pater (basketball); Roxie Rath (volleyball); Les Tuma (football) and Ted Wahl (football).

## Attorneys honor Britzman

Longtime Prairie Striders member and race director Steve Britzman was honored for his other job — municipal attorney.

He received the Distinguished Service Award from the South Dakota Municipal Attorney's Association at its Oct. 8-11 gathering in Aberdeen. He served the interests of Brookings and Volga city governments for many years.

As a Prairie Striders volunteer he directed the Arbor Day 5K for 30 years (1989-2019) and Oct. 31, 2020, will mark his 25th of directing the Hobo Day 5K. In addition, he served as president in 1995-98, was named the club's 2012 Friend of Running and continues to be active in the club's monthly meetings.

## Stoltenberg qualifies for Olympic Marathon Trials

Tessa Stoltenberg, the record-setting winner of the Brookings Half Marathon in May, attained her goal of qualifying for the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials when she ran a 2:41:10 at the Chicago Marathon Oct. 13.

The qualifying B standard for the trials is sub-2:45. After her 1:18:38 in Brookings May 11, she shared her goal of using Chicago to qualify for the Feb. 29 trials in Atlanta. She ran a 6:00 pace to beat the former Brookings record by four minutes. In Chicago, she ran a 6:09 pace for 26.2 miles to finish 30th out of 21,333 women.

Stoltenberg, a 2012 Watertown High School graduate, ran briefly at SDSU but broke her femur her sophomore year and took a year off running in 2014. She returned to running as a citizen runner with the aim of running a marathon. She found she was faster than she had ever been. "My marathon pace was faster than my 5Ks were in college,"

Stoltenberg said.

She graduated from SDSU in 2016 with a bachelor's degree in exercise science and human biology and now is studying at the University of Nebraska Medical Center to become a physician assistant.

She is coached by Eric Pooley of the Dakota Distance Project in Sioux Falls. Her previous best marathon time was 2:52:50 at Grandma's Marathon in Duluth, Minnesota, in 2018.

## Mark the dates

Prairie Striders two winter events are right around the corner.

The **Prairie Striders Indoor 5K is Saturday, Jan. 25**, in the Sanford-Jackrabbit Athletic Complex on the SDSU campus. The price remains \$20. Runners can choose between Prairie Striders socks or shirts. There will be two heats — 8:30 and 9 a.m., based on estimated finishing time.

New this year is a 7:30 a.m. noncompetitive walk. Proceeds benefit the Prairie Striders/Phil LaVallee Memorial Scholarship.

Register in advance at [allsportcentral.com](http://allsportcentral.com). Same day registration is \$25.

The **Frostbite Frolic is Saturday, Feb. 15**, at the community room of the Innovation Village Apartments, 2405 10th St. There will be a noncompetitive run on the one-mile oval at the Research Park at SDSU, which is adjacent to the apartments, beginning at 11 a.m. The potluck begins at noon with year-end awards and the Friend of Running presentation to follow.

Info: [www.prairiestriders.net](http://www.prairiestriders.net).