

The Pacesetter

A publication of the **Prairie Striders**

Vol. 23, No. 2

Brookings, S.D.



May 2026

Registration opened for Longest Day 10K

Online registration for the Harvey Mills Longest Day 10K, which also features a 5K-relay option, has opened.

The Saturday, June 20, event is one of the few 10Ks in the region. It is sponsored by Prairie Striders Running Club and is named after Harvey Mills,

one of the club's original members in 1969 and a long-time supporter and benefactor of the club.

The race was originally run as a part of the club's marathon events, which was first held June 21, 1970, and called the Longest Day Marathon.

The 8 a.m. race consists of two loops around the scenic Dakota Nature Park with no roads to cross.

Online registration is available through midnight June 18 at a cost of \$25. The entry fee is \$30 thereafter.



Race day registration is 6:30 to 7:30 a.m. at Fishback Soccer Complex in Brookings. The relay fee is \$40 per team regardless of registration date.

Shirts are available for \$5 on race morning on a first-come, first-serve basis. Awards are presented to the top three males and females.

To register, go to: <https://shorturl.at/b3dQf>

For more information, go to prairiestriders.net or contact race director Jacob Mills at jacob@mills-development.com.

Buenger takes reins of Brookings Marathon

The nation's third oldest continuously run marathon will have a new director when runners toe the starting line Oct. 3.

Matt Buenger, a member of the Brookings Marathon committee since 2023, will be directing the 57th annual event. He is only the eighth director in the race's history. That is largely due to Scotty Roberts, who directed what then called the Longest Day Marathon from 1979 through 2002, and Matt Bien, who directed from 2007 through 2023.

Dani Bohn, who directed the race in 2024 and 2025, will continue with the committee.

Buenger, a 2019 civil engineering graduate of South Dakota State University and a project engineer with Banner Associates in Brookings, became acquainted with the Brookings Marathon while participating in Leadership Brookings in 2022.

Marli Saylor, a member of the committee at the time, mentioned



Matt Buenger competes in the scenic Silver Falls Marathon in Oregon.

the marathon committee as a place to serve the community. Buenger started attending committee meetings in 2023 and helping out with course set up and other tasks. In 2024, his wife, Natalie, became volunteer coordinator.

On Sept. 7, Bohn announced her plan to step down after the Oct. 18, 2025, marathon. At that point Buenger started following Bohn more closely.

"When Dr. Bien first stepped back I thought about being director. I'm passionate about running. I have the Brookings Marathon on my mind a lot, but I knew I had only been on the committee one year. Then Dani announced she was going to step down. I thought then if no one else on the committee wanted to become director, I would," Buenger said.

No other contenders emerged and a few weeks before race day Buenger knew the duties would be his in 2026.

No major changes planned for 2026

He is opting to gain a year of experience before contemplating any changes. Buenger noted that race course recertification is due in 2028. "If we were to change the course, that would be the time to do it. The course does highlight a lot of Brookings, but it also requires a lot of volunteers (about 350). That can be tricky when you're still short of volunteers close to race day or if someone backs out.

"But the community has always come through and we have a large corps of volunteers who help every year," Buenger said.

That and whether to stick with a fall marathon or revert to the race's more



The Buenger family—wife Natalie, daughter Juliet, 2; son Clark, 6 months, and Matt.

See Buenger
Continued on Page 2

Buenger

Continued from Page 1

traditional spring date will be decisions that must be made late this fall. "I want to thank the runners, volunteers and committee members who have made the Brookings Marathon a great event in the past and I look forward to continuing that," he said.

Buenger has a strong cadre of committee members, including his wife, who will continue as volunteer coordinator.

Other committee members are: Lori Munsterman, Matt Schreiber, Andrea Schmidt, Kevin Smith, Dani Bohn, Derrick Powers, Gabriel Peters and Rana Hegg.

Running resume includes Pikes Peak Marathon

As a bridge engineer, he hopes his number-oriented brain can be an asset to the race.

Buenger also is an experienced marathoner—nine to date with his first one coming at Fargo, N.D., while still in college. "I hadn't trained enough and at

Mile 18 said I'm never running one again. Then you kind of forget the pain and think it would be fun to try again and do better."

Buenger was a sprinter in high school, but with encouragement from his late uncle, Greg Buenger, they competed in a mud run a couple months after Matt's graduation.

An admitted adventure seeker, he also isn't afraid of pain. In 2022, he ran the Pikes Peak Marathon, a seven-hour ordeal beginning at 6,300 feet elevation and reaching the half marathon mark at the peak's 14,115-foot summit.

In June 2025, he competed in the Des Moines 70.3 Ironman, which is a 1.2-mile open water swim, a half marathon run and a 56-mile bike ride. The Sheldon, Iowa, native said his next adventure may be a full Ironman or improving his marathon time.

However, with a 2-year-old, Juliet, and 6-month-old, Clark, directing the Brookings Marathon may be enough of an adventure in 2026.

Matt Bien noted, "Matt has always shown a keen interest in learning more about managing the race and all that goes into putting on a marathon. He's also



Atop Pikes Peak, the hard part of the Pikes Peak Marathon. But going down the rocky and, at times, narrow trail is no picnic. Matt Buenger completed the adventure in 2022.

part of a new generation of marathon runners. That along with his own racing experience should really help the Brookings Marathon evolve and grow."

Niva, Lahr finish 41st LA Marathon despite blistering heat

By Dave Graves
Newsletter editor

What is the distance of a marathon?

Any veteran runner can tell you — 26 miles, 385 yards; commonly 26.2 miles. But for the 41st running of the Los Angeles Marathon, it was either 18 or 26.2 miles. Due to dangerously high temperatures expected for March 8, race organizers gave the 23,000 runners the option of going 18 miles and still receive their finisher's medal.

Nearly 1,000 runners (985) did so. That count didn't include Brookings runners Gordon Niva and Susan Lahr. They haven't taken a shortcut in the Los Angeles Marathon since the day it was first run in 1986. The couple is among 78 Legacy Runners, people who have run every LA Marathon since Day One.

It was 63 degrees at the 7 a.m. race start, nine degrees warmer than normal. "We normally need a cool weather top or a garbage bag to wear while waiting for the race to start, but not that day," Niva said. Temperatures peaked at 88 degrees, which is 19 degrees hotter than the race's 16-year average, a condition best suited for the swimming pool.

At ages 75 and 74, one might understand why Niva and Lahr would opt for the shorter option. However, they never gave it a thought and have no regrets despite Lahr feeling the impact of dehydration just past Mile 20.

"We carried water and drank frequently, but dehydration set in," Niva said. "Dehydration is subtle and insidious. You can feel fine and then suddenly—bonk!

"That's what happened to Susan just past mile 20. She didn't hit the wall in



the traditional sense, but we did find a wall for her to sit against in the shade to recover for a few minutes. She recovered and pressed on.

"We broke our Galloway rhythm and walked as necessary to finish. We still were averaging about 16-minute miles despite the dehydration.

"For the last few years, we have been using a modified technique espoused by Jeff Galloway. He advocated alternating jogging and walking—we call it 'Jeffing.' We do that with the goal of finishing between 6 and 7 hours depending on conditions. This year we alternated walking .4 of a mile and jogging .1 of a mile."

Niva said 78 Legacy Runners finished the Los Angeles Marathon that day—all at 26.2 miles, even though some took as much as 16 hours on the streets to do so.

Lahr and Niva finished in 6:58:15 and 6:58:17, respectively. "We left the hotel at 5:30 a.m. We arrived back at 4 p.m. "A long day and a long walk in the big city," Niva said.

New scholarships honors longtime BHS coaches

Brookings High School seniors Maya Hansen and Marco Springman are the inaugural recipients of the Russ Strande and John Iverson Prairie Striders Scholarship.

The \$500 awards honor Russ Strande, who spent 27 years as a teacher and coach at Brookings High School, including 24 years as head cross country coach and 15 years as head track and field coach, and John Iverson who coached BHS cross country cross country for 10 years and track for 32 years.

The scholarships go to a Brookings High School senior distance runner who exemplifies leadership, dedication and sportsmanship. Hansen and Springman were both four-year participants. The BHS coaches called them "hardworking teammates who are deserving of a scholarship of this nature."



The athletes were recognized at the April 21 Brookings Alumni meet. Pictured, from left, are Hansen, Strande, Iverson and Springman.

Member Spotlight

Name: Nancy Gieske

Age: 64

Residence: Incline Village, Nevada (Lake Tahoe)

Occupation: Biopharmaceutical consultant for 15 years

Years as a Prairie Strider member: Oh dear, I don't recall.

Why you're a member:

I am grateful for having the opportunity to know Bob and be a friend of his. Bob Bartling was a spectacular inspiration for the running community and life in general.

Bob always had an enthusiastic demeanor, beaming smile that radiated, was exceptionally positive, and very supportive of SDSU, the community, and enjoyed various walks of life. Bob was a resource of information on various topics and a genuine fellow.

I treasured going to the basement of Bartling's Furniture store where Bob displayed various running shoes and paraphernalia, numerous running photos, race bibs, and shared running stories.

I would marvel at the stacks of Runner's World and Track and Field News magazines, and other running articles that were piled up or pinned up on the basement wall and listen to Bob's enthusiastic storytelling about a particular runners' race, their times, and where they came from.

Bob, I think, could just about memorize almost any running event he read about, observed, or partook in. *Thank you, Bob, for all the stories and fond memories!*

What you enjoy about running, what running taught me, and how running has carried me forward:

Running for SDSU introduced me to genuine friendships that have remained with me since attending SDSU in the early '80s. The women and men XC and track teammates cared and reached out for one another in a manner that is difficult to easily describe.

I cannot really say I run miles anymore, though have thought about attempting to see if I can run a mile in a decent time (undefined!) someday – perhaps trail running (more like shuffling) would be a nice challenge.

However, what I used to enjoy about running was the teammates' camaraderie, hearing the topics of the day whether from Bob or running mates, and when running solo disassociating from the day-to-day responsibilities and freely thinking uninterrupted while losing track of time!

Running taught me to persevere under good as well as undesirable conditions. Challenges from weather, injuries, sickness, equipment issues, and timing peak performance are encountered at some point for most athletes and need to be balanced in sports and for all walks of life. The good days are easy (the runner's high), the not-so-good days are less fun. *We learn to work through and adapt to the challenges for the next event and the*

next chapter in life.

I now ski race, mountain bike and hike mountain trails.

I'm passionate about skiing and have encountered various ski injuries (some severe), and fortunately have been able to return to the sport after recovering and still improve free skiing and racing. Hopefully, that trend continues.

This ski season in February I had a severe ski accident that required major shoulder and knee surgeries. The recovery period is much longer than desired; however, the plan is to return next ski season and continue to compete in master's racing.

For now, mountain biking and hiking in the Tahoe/Sierra Nevada high country, ascending and descending several thousand feet, is a great alternative to skiing and provides a fun means to cross-train. As with running, I enjoy and appreciate the vertical ascend challenge (both biking and hiking) and the reward of the peak view.

Favorite running memory:

There is more than one. Racing at Nationals for XC and track. The pre-race jitters, stretching before the race, removing the warm-up pants/jacket and feeling light, running in place (lifting the knees high quickly), lightly jogging and pacing back and forth behind the start line, and toeing up to the start line in anticipation of when the starter would say "ready" and the sound of the gun for "GO!"

My son Cory (now 33 years old) and daughter Charlene (shy of 31 years old) ran XC and track in high school.

I recall the excitement for Cory was when he broke 2:00 minutes in the 800m and for Charlene when advancing to regionals. Watching Cory and Charlene prepare for races and racing brought back many fond memories from my high school running days and running for SDSU. Those were the days and are still treasured!

Your favorite Prairie Striders race:

Running the 5-mile Raspberry Festival race in July in Hopkins, Minnesota, in the blistering summer heat and high humidity in the summer of 1981 (I believe). I used to enjoy running in the heat – odd for runners.

Several SDSU teammates ran the race since many of the ladies were from the Twin Cities. I recall Bob Bartling's excitement for the SDSU runners participating in the event, some of which traveled from South Dakota.

I had not run a 5-mile road race and recall when the gun fired, a mass of excited runners took off like no tomorrow down the hot pavement. I recall steam coming off the street as water was thrown onto runners near the end. The race was over before I knew it, the SDSU runner's raced well, and we went home with some nice hardware.

Favorite workout then as a runner and now:

I have a few favorites. Running fartlek's on the gravel road referred to as the "pig run" in Brookings, a 5- or



Nancy Gieske at her induction into the SDSU Athletic Hall of Fame in 2017.

6-mile run out and back. We'd go all out for a defined number (1, 2, 3) of telephone poles. Sometimes, I'd lose track of the number of telephone poles!

When a pick-up truck drove by, a dust storm would envelop us, some of us would close our eyes momentarily or turn our head to avoid the cloud of dirt, perhaps thinking mom always said, "a little dirt never hurt anyone."

On the track, running 800- and 1,200-meter timed intervals – feeling which lap felt faster or slower was another favorite. It amazes me how back in the day (when in peak running condition) a one- or two-second faster or slower pace was noticeably felt when lapping.

Track intervals seemed easier at times since counting telephone poles wasn't in the picture – coaches standing with a stopwatch calling out times was evident as to where to stop to catch one's breath.

Running uphill was a favorite, which has transitioned to embracing hiking and biking to the peaks in the Sierra mountains peeking at the Garmin watch at various markers throughout the trail.

When biking, I may, on good days and not-so-good days, check my Garmin at various points gauging the ride. As with running, there are days where you feel not great, perhaps terrible, and surprisingly have a decent or best time clocked. And vice versa, you can feel great/strong, and the clocked time is a "bit" disappointing.

It always puts a smile on my face when I clock my best time from point A to B or when I have not ridden for a week-plus thinking the ride is just to get the rust out of my legs (perhaps justifying that a more relaxed ride is okay), and, lo and behold, my best time occurs.

Your running goal:

Hmmm, not sure, as I cannot claim to run anymore. If I were to pick up running again, running a decent mile time and ending with a radiant smile on my face – just like Bob – would be awesome.

Bisson battles thru Boston to Big Sur Challenge

Never one to shy away from a challenge, Alex Bisson got all the challenge she wanted this April when she completed the Boston to Big Sur Challenge.

The 38-year-old Brookings woman was the 11th fastest woman to complete both the 2026 Boston Marathon on April 20 and put in another 26.2 miles April 26 at the Big Sur Marathon in California. She finished her second Boston Marathon in 3:09:49 (7:15 average pace) and finished Big Sur in 3:38:46 in a race where she placed greater emphasis on the scenery than the stopwatch.

Trimming 11 minutes off her previous Boston time certainly was no walk in the park, but the greater challenge came on Highway 1 along the Pacific Coast.

"It was a mental game after 6 to 8 miles," Bisson said of Big Sur. "After 20 miles, each mile was really a challenge. I actually ran backwards for a little bit" to relieve sore calves caused by a steep slope to the road.

She said she ran the Big Sur Marathon totally by feel. "It was downhill for the first miles, so my pace (7:30) was faster than anticipated." That near-Boston pace didn't last. "Physically (quads and lower legs) it was really challenging to finish that race. I did start to have my doubts. It became a big challenge to finish."

'It was so worth it'

But persevering sweetens the reward.

"To run Boston hard and come back to run Big Sur was one of the most challenging things of my life, but it was so worth it. Crossing the finish line was a cumulative moment — this release of a lot of different emotions I had been experiencing all week. It was a special moment I will never forget."



Alex Bisson shows off her Boston 2 Big Sur and Big Sur Marathon medals after the April 26 event.

The Boston 2 Big Sur Challenge was established in 2010 and attracts 300 to 400 runners annually, who receive exclusive gear and a special medal. Bisson said some wore their Boston bib on their back with the Big Sur bib on their front.

Bisson said she was motivated to take the challenge by Anne Harris,



Two different faces of triumph — Alex Bisson has a smile as wide as her arm span as she virtually floats across the Boston Marathon finish. At Big Sur, it was a fist pump of relief and a smile celebrating the gift of perseverance. The Brookings runner completed the two marathons within six days of each other, a test of endurance she is happy to accomplish once.

a running partner from Brookings who completed the challenge in 2024. Three other Brookings runners — Rich Reid, Katie Jones and Ross Abraham — joined Harris at Big Sur and came home with rave reports on the scenic, hilly marathon.

"I wanted the extra challenge to see if I could do it mentally," Bisson said.

"To run Boston hard and come back to run Big Sur was one of the most challenging things of my life, but it was so worth it."

— Alex Bisson

Training included 60-mile weeks

Bisson, who has now completed seven marathons, said she was accepted for Boston in late September 2025 and applied for Big Sur in October 2025. "I decided a few weeks later to do both."

She ran 55- to 60-mile weeks for 12 weeks to prepare for the two races. She also employs a running coach. "Half of a marathon is physical and half of it is mental in both training and racing," Bisson said.

The first half of Boston 2 Big Sur challenge couldn't have gone better for Bisson. Her Boston splits were nearly even — 1:34 for the first half and 1:35 for the second half — despite the second half of the course being much more challenging. "I just kept pushing. I knew I had trained well and tapered well. I felt so good. I never hit a wall."

Bisson's splits at each 5K were remarkably consistent.

Special memories from Boston

In a Facebook post, Bisson wrote, "After a desperate pit stop at Mile 24, I had

to make up for lost time. With the pace I was holding, I knew I could spare about a minute break and still run under 3:10. After that final left turn on to Boylston Street, I dug deep and gave those last few hundred meters everything I had left in the tank to cross the finish line in 3:09:49."

Her last mile was 6:58 per mile, her fastest of the race.

Another Boston highlight for Bisson was getting a high five and "Go Alex" from premiere American distance runner Emma Bates, who was offering encouragement just before Heartbreak Hill. "It was the perfect moment. She was in the right place at the right time," Bisson said.

Also, there is the emotional moment when runners hear "Right on Hereford, Left on Boylston," the iconic, final turn of the Boston Marathon, marking the last stretch to the finish line. "Running those last several hundred meters is a magical moment and always bring tears," Bisson said.

On Facebook, Bisson stated, "My body is tired, but my heart is so full. Boston, you are just a magical place and I will forever cherish the memories."

Big Sur finish: 'sweetest relief'

Bisson and her husband, John, flew back to South Dakota April 21 and had three nights at home before flying to California on April 24. She took a 4-mile shakeout run before flying out that morning and her knees and hips felt fine. But her body sang a different tune during the marathon.

Bisson wrote on Facebook, "This was hands down the most beautiful and the most difficult marathon to date. 26.2 miles of waves crashing to my left and mountains rising to my right along California's Highway 1 left me in awe. The winding roads and nonstop hills left my legs absolutely destroyed. I have never felt so far away from a finish line before in my life. It was truly the sweetest relief

See Bisson

Continued on Page 5

Bisson

Continued from Page 4

to see it come into view as I crested the final hill.”

Big Sur has 2,000 feet of elevation gain with a hill right before the halfway point that is 2 miles long with a 500-foot climb.

Next focus: Berlin

As beautiful as Big Sur was, she doesn't plan to return. While "Boston will always have a special place in my

heart," she also isn't committing to return there next year. Her next focus is the Berlin Marathon Sept. 27.

The former SDSU swimmer has a goal to run the six World Marathon Majors. Boston and Chicago are completed. After Berlin, she will need to complete Tokyo, London and New York.

While she may do Boston again, Boston to Big Sur was "once in a lifetime. Trying to do two marathons in a week once is plenty enough for me. One race in six months is plenty. It's just so hard on your body."

Oh, but what it does for the soul.



Boston perspectives

Editor's note: In addition to featuring Boston 2 Big Sur finisher Alex Bisson, the Pacesetter sought Boston perspectives from four other Prairie Striders or area runners.

Gabriel Peters, 27, M, Brookings, 2:38:43

It was my first Boston Marathon and it was a 10 out of 10 cultural experience. My ears were ringing by the end of it with how loud the cheering was. It felt like the whole city was rooting for you. I ended up seeing a lot of people I knew just along the course and my whole family made it out to watch too. The weather and conditions were perfect as well.



Former SDSU runner Ben Olson now has an Olympic Marathon Trials qualifying time.

I wish I would have ran it sooner, my preparation for this race wasn't ideal, but glad I could participate. It was nice to have done it with some SDSU XC alums (including Ben Olson, 2:11:42, 16th American, 32nd overall, 2024 SDSU grad and a member of Gazelle Elite; and Tom Breuckman, 2:27:49, 204th overall, 2023 SDSU grad).

Boston was also a very neat city with lots of cool architecture and American history, which was highlighted on Patriot's Day. I'm thinking of running again next year...Oh and Heartbreak Hill was a real soul crusher. Gotta respect the course.

Nancy Scholl, 69, F, Brookings, 4:34:01

Running the Boston marathon is so much more for me than running 26.2 miles on an iconic course. Receiving the official e-mail of acceptance starts the build-up of excitement and anticipation of joining tens' of thousands of runners, in blue, and their supporters on the streets of downtown Boston the weekend before the Monday race.

This year's highlights were attending a live recording of the podcast 'Nobody Asked Us' with (professional runners) Des Linden and Kara Goucher, and having the support of my husband (Dan).

Though I didn't perform as I'd expected on race day, I do have positive memories. I was able to help a couple runners who experienced leg cramps and hopefully encouraged a few others who were waning towards the end of the race.

Finally, Boston just wouldn't be Boston without the 500,000+ spectators who line the streets yelling incessantly with signs, Vaseline and orange slices.

Note: This was Scholl's fourth Boston Marathon and she is considering running it again.

Donna Thompson, 60, F, Estelline, 4:11:33

This was my first time running the Boston Marathon. It was an overall amazing experience. I was impressed with how well organized the event was; it truly blew me away.

While I felt as though I was very prepared to run the race, I discovered that I did not prepare enough for the long gradual hills or running at a different time of day than I was used to. I would love to run the Boston Marathon again after having a year of experience and to conquer the hills.

Andriette Wickstrom, 71, F, Storm Lake, Iowa, 5:05:31

I ran my 35th consecutive Boston Marathon this year, and although it was my third slowest of 133 lifetime marathons, I was very pleased to finish at all, crossing the finish line with a chip time of just under 5 hours and six minutes.

Last Halloween I had tripped and cracked both my left femur and kneecap, and because of a long recovery time, I was probably the most under trained person to show up at the starting line in Hopkinton. It would be interesting to know how many other participants ran only 173 miles in the 5 1/2 months preceding the race!

So I consider myself lucky to be able to run at all that day and actually get done before midnight.

But I am not the only person to run a marathon with extreme adversity. I was inspired by my 75- year-old friend, Cary Segall of Madison, who completed the Madison Marathon last November only 26 days after undergoing an aortic valve replacement.

I do plan on returning next year to continue my streak, but I am NOT planning to run it while injured!

SDSU cross country runners from the late 1970s gathered at Minervas restaurant in Sioux Falls May 15. The stories of races won and lost and the lifelong friendships that were created made for a truly memorable evening, attendees attest.

In addition, booster Don Arend was given a plaque for being so supportive of the SDSU Jackrabbit cross country and track and field teams throughout the years. Arend started following and supporting twins Mark and Mike Bills while at Sioux Falls Lincoln High School and then on to SDSU.

Pictured, from left, Randy Fischer, coach Scott Underwood, Mike Dunlap, Dan Propst, Mark Bills, Vicki Nelson, Mike Bills, Joel Brandt and Paul Brandt.



Not pictured: Jan Cain, Bruce Keppen, Carolyn Steinborn and Don Arend.

Health & Running

How running slows your biological clock



By Matt Bien

You just finished a hard workout. You're definitely fatigued, maybe a little sore. You also feel a sense of accomplishment. You know the work will pay off on race day. Job well done!

What you may not realize is just how much that workout can affect your body at the cellular level, literally right down to your DNA.

A recent observational study from BYU adds to the growing body of evidence

that running can turn back the hands of time. It found that **vigorous aerobic exercise is linked to longer telomeres**, the protective caps on the ends of our chromosomes. Cellular turnover with aging slowly shortens the telomeres, eventually reaching a point at which the cell can no longer divide or regenerate.

Compared to their sedentary counterparts, active individuals in this study showed significantly longer telomeres, indicating less wear and tear on their DNA. For the active subjects, the difference amounted to **winding back their biological clocks by nine years**.

Researchers think that the "healthy stress" of a workout accounts for this anti-aging effect. A vigorous run of at least 30 minutes signals your body to prioritize repair over decline. This exertion triggers a specialized maintenance crew within your cells to actively rebuild those protective caps

and prevent or slow the fraying caused by aging.

Will running lead to a longer, healthier life? We don't have a final answer, but early research is promising and the mechanism is plausible. If nothing else, such studies offer additional encouragement to lace up those running shoes.

Aim for 150 minutes of running each week, at least 30 minutes per session. Push the pace once or twice a week. Repeat for years. And remember, you're not just training for your next race. You're slowing that biological clock one mile at a time.

Editor's note: *Dr. Bien is a physician with Avera in Brookings. He has raced every distance from 400 meters to the marathon. This summer, he plans to join teammates for the Hood to Coast Relay in Oregon.*

Member Spotlight

Name: Danny Radtke

Age: 29

Residence: Aurora

Occupation: Plant manager of MTR Technologies

Family: Engaged to Micheala Kelley

Years as a Prairie Strider member: 1

Why you're a member:

I knew of Prairie Striders when I was running for SDSU but did not know much beyond that. Later I was approached to be the race director for the Arbor Day 5k in 2024. After learning what all goes into each race that is put on for our community by the Prairie Striders, it seemed like something I would like to be a part of.

What you enjoy about running:

It is a good time for me to reflect and think without any distractions. It is also a quick and simple form of exercise that I can fit into my routine.

Favorite running memory:

One of my favorite running memories comes from my ninth-grade outdoor track season.

Near the end of the year, our coaches decided to put together a

4x800 relay team for the Subsection 7A meet. None of us typically raced the 800 meters, so we didn't really know what to expect going in.

As the race unfolded, we started to realize that we were running faster than anticipated and that excitement kept building until we saw the time we ran.

Going into the race we were hoping to be in the top two or three and maybe at the section meet we could be in the mix at getting second place to advance to the state meet. But what we ran was a time that ranked fifth in the whole state of Minnesota for Class A.

This was all the moment that stands out to me because of the excitement I shared with my senior teammates, but it also changed my mentality of the sport.

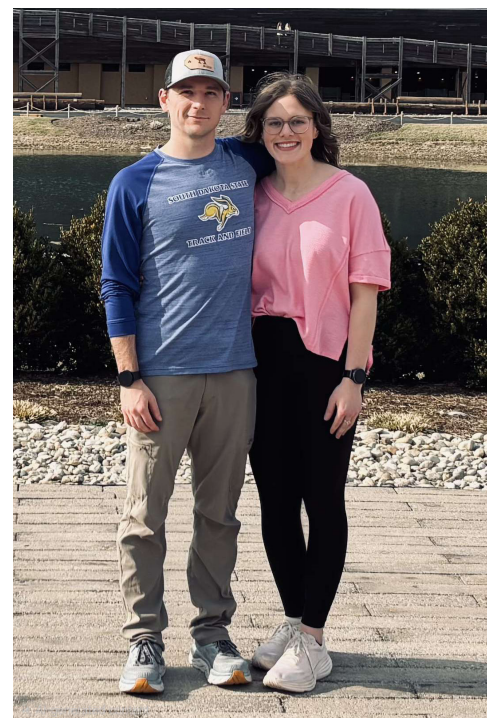
Until then I was all in on basketball. Cross country and track were sports to do in the off season of basketball. But this made track my primary athletic focus and ultimately is the reason I am in South Dakota today.

Your favorite Prairie Striders race:

Arbor Day 5k

Favorite workout:

Since college, my favorite workouts



have been speed work such as 200- or 300-meter repeats, which I still enjoy doing.

Your running goal:

To win the SDSU Alumni Mile, but that window may already be closed for me, so I would settle for the Alumni 4x300m.

Deadwood, Crazy Horse discounts offered to PS members

The Deadwood Mickelson Trail Marathon, Half Marathon, and 5-Person Marathon Relay and the Run Crazy Horse Marathon Half Marathon and Marathon Relay are offering a \$10 discount to Prairie Strider members.

June 7 will be the 26th running of the race, which takes runners from an abandoned mining town, across railroad trestles, through a mountain, past monolithic rock formations, beside a babbling creek and finishes in Deadwood. The walker-friendly course is open for seven hours and all finishers receive a commemorative medal.

To register: Visit <https://www.deadwoodmickelsontrailmarathon.com>

At checkout, enter **10off2026** in the discount code box to receive the \$10 discount. The code is valid through May 28.

At the Oct. 4 Crazy Horse Marathon, the sound of native drums will send runners on their way for a run through the sacred land of the Lakota people. The adventure will begin in the shadow of the world's largest mountain carving, Crazy Horse Memorial, and end in the heart of the hills.....Hill City.

To register: visit www.RunCrazyHorse.com

At checkout, enter **10off2026** in the discount code box to receive the \$10 discount.