

# The Pacesetter

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## New love — running — brings a new life to Puppe

By **Dave Graves**  
Newsletter editor

“If you asked me a few years ago if I would be running for fun, I would have called you crazy.”

Now former Brookings resident Josh Puppe is crazy in love with running. A wrestler and soccer player at Brookings High School, Puppe would run occasionally during college at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and afterwards. That changed Jan. 1, 2020, when the professional architect began a running streak that is still intact.

He set a 2020 goal of running the year and logged 2,500 miles, generally in chunks of five to eight miles. His 2021 goal is 3,650 miles—10 miles per day—while continuing his daily streak.

In high school, Puppe was a standout wrestler, highlighted by a fourth-place finish his senior year of 2012.

“In high school I ran for wrestling as a way to lose weight. It made me view running as an unenjoyable thing,” Puppe said. In 2019, he sporadically ran “a couple hundred miles. (But) two years later I decided to make some changes. I quit drinking alcohol Oct. 15, 2019, started eating healthy and made a vow to run every day starting Jan. 1.

“I bought a pair of shoes and started running. How difficult could running be? It’s put one foot in front of the other.”

### Rude awakening for body

But as Puppe kept his vow, he found it was challenging.

“My body went into shock when I started to put on the miles. My body was not being prepared for it. (But) I’m learning how I need to take care of my body. I learned what a foam roller was,” said Puppe, who had to work through shin splints and Achilles tendon flareup. This year he has dealt with hip tightness, which caused knee pain and tight calves.

However, Puppe has been able to work through each of the injuries with stretching and foam rolling; nothing that required medical attention.

### Now has running buddies

Most of his runs have been solo on paved trails in Lincoln, but he has found some crushed limestone and dirt trails in Lincoln and was discovered by Lincoln Running Co.

“Some guys with Lincoln Running Co. spotted me running by myself past their house every day. They stopped me and said, ‘Hey, you don’t have to do this by yourself.’ I’ve met 30 to 40 amazing people in the last six months,” including Prairie Strider Emily Berzonsky who works in Lincoln and attended Brookings High School in 2011-13.

Now Puppe does a Wednesday



evening social run, meeting at the downtown Lincoln Running Co. for a five-mile run. He would also run in the morning so he got in 10 miles for the day.

It’s a rare day when Puppe will go to the gym to get in his mileage. “To lose weight in high school I ran on the treadmill” and he still holds that grudge against the treadmill. In fact, in the worst of last winter’s weather, when a February storm brought eight to 10 inches of snow and a negative 40-degree windchill, “I still ran my 10 miles outside.”

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## Friend of Running Award to follow Indoor 5K

Prairie Striders will present its year-end awards, including the 2021 Friend of Running Award, at the conclusion of the seventh annual Prairie Striders Indoor 5K at the Sanford/Jackrabbit Athletic Complex on the SDSU campus Jan. 22.

All levels of runners are welcome as the race will have two heats — 8:30 a.m. for those planning to run in 24 minutes or less and the other at 9 a.m. In addition, there is a noncompetitive walk at 7:30 a.m. Participants may walk as many laps as they desire until 8:15 a.m. Cost for the walk is \$15.

As a treat to participants and those coming for the awards ceremony, the club will provide Saturday morning cinnamon rolls.

Nominations for the Friend of Running Award are due Dec. 31. A nomination form and list of past winners can be found at <http://www.praiestriders.net/friend-of-running.html>. Information also can be sent to [run@praiestriders.net](mailto:run@praiestriders.net).

Since 2007, Prairie Striders Running Club has been honoring someone from the running community for their support of Prairie Strider activities and/or promoting running in the Brookings community. Those 14 people also will be recognized in advance of honoring the 2021 recipient.

Net proceeds from the Indoor 5K go to the Prairie Striders/Phil LaVallee Memorial Scholarship for the SDSU track/cross country program. All participants will receive a Prairie Striders headband.

## 2022 race schedule

Prairie Striders Indoor 5K.....	Saturday, Jan. 22
Arbor Day 5K.....	Friday, April 29
Scotty Roberts 5K.....	Friday, May 13
Brookings Marathon, Half & Relays.....	Saturday, May 14
Longest Day 10K.....	Saturday, June 18
Beef and Eggs 5K.....	Saturday, July 9
Predictor Mile.....	Wednesday, Aug. 3
Oakwood Lakes Trail Run.....	Saturday, Aug. 13
Jack 15.....	Saturday, Sept. 24
Hobo Day 5K.....	Saturday, Oct. 29
Turkey Day Run.....	Thursday, Nov. 24

Packet pickup is immediately preceding the race. Doors open at 7 a.m.

Runners should note they will need to track their laps (16 2/3). Lap counters will only be able to track the leaders, so runners may want to use a clicker or a function on their watch or smartphone to avoid confusion.

Enter online at [www.raceentry.com](http://www.raceentry.com). Entry fee is \$25 through Jan. 17. Late entry is \$30. Race-day entries also will be taken at the door.

Jay Larsen is co-directing the race with Dave Graves. Contact the directors at [run@praiestriders.net](mailto:run@praiestriders.net) or 605-627-5718.



# New love

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## Personal fulfillment



Josh Puppe, kneeling, second from right, gathers at Lincoln Running Co. in downtown Lincoln, Neb., before heading out on a group run this fall.

Puppe did a little better than 10 miles per day. He is set to hit his goal of 3,650 Dec. 18. With the goal hit, he might take couple of easy days of one- and two-mile runs. "I like the idea of running every day. If I take a day off, I feel there will be an emptiness."

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***"Where one would think running would take energy, it actually gives you energy."***

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Puppe has used running—and healthy eating—to trim 35 to 40 pounds and improve his muscle tone. He now weighs 126 to 130 pounds, quite close to what he wrestled at in 2012. But the biggest surprise he discovered through running is "the clarity of mind it affords you and the time with yourself to reconsider life. If you ever have something troubling you, go out for a run. You will have worked it out by the time you're done."

"If you begin every day running it makes everything else in life seem that much easier. It empowers to you take on that much more. Where one would think running would take energy, it actually gives you energy."

## An inspiration to grandfather

Puppe's newfound love also has given inspiration to his 77-year-old grandfather, Marlin Hintz. He had been doing

some walking, but after Puppe put the Strava app on his phone, Hintz upped his dedication. Hintz began his "almost every day" walking habit Aug. 16, 2020, the day before his birthday. As of Dec. 2, he was at 1,057 miles with 438 of those miles in 2021.

His ritual: Leave home (1221 Third St.) at 7:30 a.m., walk downtown for coffee, head home by Hillcrest School and be home by 8:30 a.m.

Like his grandson, he isn't deterred by cold weather. On the 7-degree Thanksgiving morning, he was getting in his 2.75-mile ritual.

Hintz admits he does skip some days when he heads out to fish.

But for Puppe, "I can't make excuses. It's easy to find an excuse to not run. 'I'll quit drinking tomorrow, I'll get healthy tomorrow.' Goals have brought me discipline."



Puppe's mother, Shannon, now gets her exercise on the bike, but for many years was an avid runner.

# City honors Striders, race director Bien



Prairie Striders and Brookings Marathon race director Matt Bien were honored at the Mayor's Awards ceremony Dec. 2 at the Swiftel Center.

The Brookings Park & Recreation Board initiated individual and group awards in 2021. Bien was the first recipient in the individual category. Prairie Striders Running Club won in the group category.

Bien, an enthusiastic supporter of running in Brookings, served as president of the club from 2003 to 2009 and has been director of the Brookings Marathon since 2007. The nomination particularly noted the work Bien went

to in 2020 to safely stage the marathon during the COVID-19 pandemic. The race was delayed from May to Sept. 12 but still required a great deal of extra preparations and precautions.

A wave start reduced crowding at the start line, no awards ceremony was held, post-race refreshments were individually packaged, temperature checks were required and the size of the field was reduced. The work paid off. There were no reported cases of COVID spread related to the races and Brendan Sage won in 2:24:44, the fourth fastest time in race history.

In receiving the group award, it was noted that the club sponsors races every distance from one mile to the marathon as well as promoting running for fun, fitness and fellowship. In addition to physical well-being, it was noted road races also provide an economic boost from out-of-town participants.

In accepting the award, club president Dave Graves noted the cooperation Prairie Striders has received from the city and particularly the parks department, which in 2021 opened up the Dakota Nature Park trail for use at the Arbor Day 5K.

# New life members

Congratulations to the following who became life members: 2020— Tom Woodall, Charleston, Ill.

March — Benda Berseth, Steve Berseth, Anne Harris, Dan Hansen, Katie McNeary-Jones, Deb Leiferman, Tara Mills and Gail Robertson, all of Brookings.

April — Lou Eggebraaten, Brookings; Randy Fischer, Yankton.

That brings to 115 the number of Prairie Striders life members. Life membership is open to all club members who donate \$100 or more toward the club (Box 504, Brookings 57006).



# Single age mark set by 14-year-old at Jack 15

By Dave Graves  
Newsletter editor

Fourteen-year-olds aren't supposed to run the Jack 15. Not that there is any rule against it. Simply, it's rare to find a 14-year-old who could and would run 15 miles.

Margaux LaPorte is an exception to that. The Des Moines, Iowa, teen ran the Jack 15 Sept. 25 and set an age record. Her time of 2:06:46 broke a mark that had stood since 1979 when Dana Jacobson of Bruce finished in 2:08:24. There is only one other female 14-year-old finisher, Nikki Zebell of Parker in 1978 (2:26:45).

The youngest female Jack 15 finisher is Shelly Koistenen, 12, of Huron, in 1980 (2:00:51). The fastest female finisher in the 10-14 age group is Karen Endacott, 13, of Dale, Neb. (1:50:59).

LaPorte, a freshman at Roosevelt High School in Des Moines, was hoping for a two-hour finish, but wasn't disappointed in her run, which had an average pace of 8:20.

"It definitely felt good to have achieved a new farthest distance," said LaPorte, whose previous longest run was 13.6 miles about a month earlier.

During the cross country season, LaPorte split her time between the varsity and junior varsity squads of a very salty Roosevelt squad. While experienced in cross country racing, the Jack 15 was her first true road race. In November 2020, she did run a 10-miler, but because of COVID-19 restrictions, individuals had slotted start times.

At the Jack 15, she started with 52 other individual runners, one of whom was her father, Mike Gorski, 47.

Gorski made the trip to Brookings in 2020 for the Jack 15 in part because it was one of the few live races being held during the COVID-19 pandemic and in part because his son, Luke, is a student at South Dakota State University.

"When I decided to do the Jack 15 in 2020, she wanted to come. I said no because I didn't know the course and wasn't sure she was ready. But this year I asked her if she wanted to give it a try and she said yes," Gorski said.

LaPorte said it was helpful to run with her dad. "Dad is the one with the running watch and experienced running races. It definitely helped to have another mind and have someone to



Mike Gorski and his 14-year-old daughter Margaux LaPorte near the Jack 15 finish line Sept. 25. They clocked a 2:06:46, which makes LaPorte the fastest 14-year-old female to finish the Jack 15.

listen to," said LaPorte, who admitted that by the end of the race she wasn't much of a conversation partner.

"When I run long distances, the last couple miles are a struggle. Are we done yet? As the miles to the finish line goes down, so does my patience. The last three to four miles my ability to have a conversation was slim," she said.

Afterwards, LaPorte and Gorski spent much of the day walking around with Luke Gorski, which helped ward off soreness. Nonetheless, at Monday's cross country practice, when the team had a track workout, "I was surprised how destroyed my legs felt," she said. Her next cross country meet was Thursday, by which time she was 95% recovered.

Her return for the 60th annual Jack 15 on Sept. 24, 2022, is dependent on her cross country schedule, however, she does have a goal of running a 20-miler.

## Elite Runners Spend More Time in Air, Less on Ground, Than Highly Trained but Nonelite Peers

Newswise — A recent study led by Geoff Burns, an elite runner and postdoctoral researcher at the University of Michigan Exercise & Sport Science Initiative, compared the "bouncing behavior"—the underlying spring-like physics of running—in elite-level male runners (sub-four-minute milers) vs. highly trained but not elite runners.

Subjects ran on a treadmill instrumented with a pressure plate beneath the belt, so Burns and colleagues could see how much time they spent in the air and in contact with the ground. When running, muscles and limbs coordinate to act like a giant pogo stick, and those muscles, tendons and ligaments interact to recycle energy from step to step, Burns says.

The researchers looked at the basic physics of the runners as pogo sticks—called a "spring-mass" system in biomechanics—to see how those giant springs differed between elite and highly trained runners, and found some interesting and surprising differences.

### What did you find?

We often think of running as pushing off the ground, but it's actually a beautifully coordinated bounce. All animals that run behave like this—even the ones with multiple pairs of legs coordinating to "bounce" along the ground.

In general, the elite runners were "stiffer" spring-mass systems with steeper impact angles—think of stiffer, more upright pogo sticks. Across various speeds, the elites had similar stride lengths and stride frequencies (similar cadences, or steps-per-minute) as highly trained runners, but elites spent more time in the air and less on the ground, especially at the

lower speeds. With their "stiffer" spring behavior on each step, they may be better recycling that gravitational energy from the time in the air to quickly and efficiently bounce along, step-to-step.

One of the key findings was that difference in speeds. Across all speeds, the elite runners were in the air longer, but both time on the ground and in the air changed differently across speeds in the two groups. In both measures, the highly trained group approached the elites at faster speeds, but at lower speeds—where both groups spend the bulk of training time—the times were very divergent, with the elites more similar to their patterns at faster speeds.

**In your study, you write that the interaction of nature and nurture—not one or the other—may give rise to their emergent, elite ability. Can you explain?**

I suspect for each runner it operates on a spectrum. There are aspects of nature, or at least aspects that are developed very early on, such as tendon properties or neuromuscular recruitment patterns. But those things, and other contributing factors to these "system" characteristics of a runner's bouncing patterns, can be developed to some extent. It's probable that an interaction of nature and nurture allowed certain people to take to the training and racing that further developed the characteristics of an elite runner.

**How did your own talent emerge? Was there a time when it became clear that you had special abilities?**

I think my intrinsic physical qualities that allowed me to excel were my more malleable physiology and capacity to absorb training, meaning an ability to get better (perhaps, a nature that is readily nurtured). That ability to adapt and improve coupled with an intense desire and drive to do so is a good combo.

To read the full story, go to [shorturl.at/wN013](https://shorturl.at/wN013)



# Making friends with discipline

## 'Pure joy' for Carlson in completing 100-miler

By Dave Graves

Newsletter editor



"Humans are capable of amazing things when determined."

The author of those words would know something about that. Andy Carlson, director of the Oakwood Lakes Trail Run, penned those words on Facebook after completing the Hennepin Hundred Oct. 2-3 on a point-to-point, all-trail course from Sterling, Ill., along the historic Hennepin Canal to Colona, Ill., near the mighty Mississippi River.

Carlson began training for his first 100-miler in January and upped his training from 40 miles per month to 125 to 150 miles.

Carlson, a Lake Preston High School graduate and an Erwin native, said, "I've always been a runner. I ran cross country and track at Lake Preston and running was my preferred form of exercise in college." He ran his first marathon in 2009 at age 26 and long considered 26.2 miles to be the ultimate distance.

About four years ago, a friend asked him to join a Ragnar trail relay run through the trail system at Rib Mountain, Wis. Carlson was one of four runners and logged a total of 36 miles over 24 hours.

### Looking for a bigger challenge

That led him to run a 50K (31 miles) race in the Black Hills a couple of years ago. It left the father of four looking for a bigger challenge.

"I had read about Hennepin Hundred in Trail Runner magazine, how it was a flat course on a nice trail. I thought, if I'm going to do this, I don't need to be dealing with a lot of elevation changes," said Carlson, who registered for the race as soon as registration opened in early February. It quickly hit the cap of 300 runners.

To give variety to his training, one month he ran a 5K (3.1 miles) every day. One month he ran a 10K every day. In addition, he did some bicycling for cross training. The big training runs were the Black Hills 50-miler in July and running four miles every four hours in Brookings for 48 hours during Labor Day weekend.

"I do pay close attention to my Garmin watch for heart rate versus my speed. I let the metrics of the watch determine how hard to push. That was really frustrating after the 50-miler. I was jacked, I was excited and ready to keep the momentum going.

"But my body was saying you're risking injury if you push it too much. I had to turn it down for three to four weeks because it would have been really devastating to have some injury that negates six or seven months of training for the 100-miler," Carlson said.

### Slow = success

The disciplined training paid off when he and his wife, Staci, made the 545-mile trip to northern Illinois. Carlson felt confident in his training. The Black Hills 50-miler was good preparation on how to prepare. Interestingly, so was a half-marathon he paced in April in Sioux Falls. He was assigned the 14-mile pace group, about half as slow as he would run a 5K.

But it helped him gain discipline in running slow. "The best thing for me was going slower," Carlson said of his Skedaddle run.

He said the most challenging part of the Hennepin Hundred was having the discipline to run slow during the early miles. His

goal was not to exceed an 11-minute pace while the body was fresh. By going easy on the throttle early and minimizing time stopped at aid stations, he was able to reach both his goals—foremost finishing and secondarily finishing under 24 hours. His time was 23 hours, 27 minutes and 15 seconds.

His overall pace was 14:04 per mile with 20 hours and 45 minutes spent moving and two hours and 41 minutes in aid stations, which is just a hair over 8 minutes per aid station. Carlson's goal was to be under 10 minutes per aid station. He spent zero minutes sleeping, but did stiffen up quickly while at the latter aid stations.

### 'Mind stayed sharp'

"I had a ton of endorphins flowing and a bunch of determination. My muscles were tired but my mind stayed sharp," Carlson said.

Most of his mental time was spent meditating, enjoying the scenery or focusing on reaching the next aid station, which were about five miles apart. He did listen to about two hours of music and part of the Jacks football game.

In a Facebook posting, Carlson wrote, "I had trouble focusing my vision in the middle of the night. Fortunately, I was on some good sections of trail and could shut off my waist light and within a few miles, everything was normal again. Never once did I consider quitting."

### Finishes in top third



A lot did. Of the 300 registered, there were 136 finishers with Carlson placing 47th overall, 32nd among males and 12th in his age division. Carlson was the only South Dakotan entered. First place went to Scott Traer, 40, of Woburn, Mass., with an incredible time of 13:54 (8:20 pace). The last person to cross finished in 32:01 (19:12 pace).

All finishers receive a Hennepin Hundred belt buckle, but Carlson was one of 62 to receive the "fancy" buckle that goes to sub-24-hour finishers.

Carlson said his placing percentage is better for the ultramarathon than the marathon. He credits that to mental discipline.

"It's the push to keep going on the mental side of things. It's easy for me to keep going at a slower pace than a faster pace. I've basically accepted the thought 'if you want to keep going you can.' This whole thing is a huge mental challenge. In a 100-miler you have to focus on the next aid station, not the finish. You just have to focus on how many miles to the aid station."

Carlson said he was greatly encouraged by comments from back home.



# Making Friends

Continued from Page 4

## Wife delivered encouragement along course

Staci Carlson was a one-person support crew for her husband during the Hennepin Hundred. There were 20 aid stations on the course and Staci was able to meet him at most aid stations. She carried some supplies, but mostly she carried encouragement. Staci was posting Carlson's progress on Facebook and reporting favorable comments.

"One person told me, 'I stayed up until 2:30 a.m. and when I got up, the first thing I did was check on you,'" Carlson reported.

Such encouragement feels pretty good when you're running hour after hour, basically by yourself. In a Facebook posting after the race, Carlson wrote, "Thanks for all of your interest and support surrounding my recent race. Staci did a fantastic job crewing for me and keeping me up to date on your comments. I thought of you all often as I pushed through the miles."

Staci Carlson added, "It was thrilling to watch him accomplish such an amazing feat. The kids and I are so proud of him!"

So was his neighbor, Ashley Koltiska, who created a sidewalk chalk congratulatory message in his driveway, and his dentist, Strider Leann Diercks, who rewarded him with an ice cream gift card.

## An emotional finish

Carlson gave himself two weeks to recover before going on a 2 ½-mile jog. He said it felt good to get a shot of running endorphins after the two-week withdrawal and is considering another 100-mile run.

"By completing this race, I can now register for the Western States 100. When registration opens, I'll sign up for that lottery. I consider that the mecca of ultradistance racing in the United States. If I should get drawn for that, I would want to do that. And I really like the Black Hills 100 races. If the right person came up to me and asked, 'Would you train with me for this 100-miler?' I probably would."

When Carlson mentioned to Staci about competing in another 100-mile ultramarathon, she teased, "Let me get back to you on that one."

In all seriousness, she said, "One of the things I love about Andy is his ability to set and achieve goals. When he signed up for the 100-mile race, I wanted to give him the time he needed to be successful."

That meant Staci did a lot of solo parenting of their four children ages 1 to 8, even though Carlson did a lot of his running after 10 p.m.

The sun hadn't risen when Carlson finished the Hennepin Hundred. "At the last aid station, I was thinking you can do this. Then when I could see the lights of the finish line, emotion ready to explode out of my body, a feeling a pure joy ready to explode out of my body."

# 47 years, 100,000 miles and still going



Randy Jarzynka, 63, of Cairo, Neb., recently added his name to the relatively short list of people to have run 100,000 lifetime miles.

That is more than four times around the world. It is the equivalent of running 65 miles per week every week for 30 years.

Jarzynka has logged every one of those miles.

The Cairo native began running as a high school sophomore and continued it at Chadron State College, where he placed sixth in the NAIA marathon championship in 1981 with a time of 2:36:18. He continued running after college while living in Cairo and nearby Grand Island. Jarzynka ran his 40th and final marathon on his 40th birthday in 1999.

Now a typical run is five to six miles, meaning 35 to 40 miles per week and 1,600 miles per year. His peak year came in 1983, when he logged 4,000 miles.

In the early 1990s he ran daily for three years in a row. Since then he has been willing to take an occasional day off.

"I'm not a streak runner. I did that one time and got sick. There's just days where you have to take a day off — that's usually five or six days in a year, and that's not too many," he told the Grand Island Independent after hitting the 100K mark Nov. 20.

## Tracks mileage on graph paper

The list of 100,000-milers is listed on an Amby Burfoot website (100klifetimemiles.com) and there are only about 115 names.

"I thought there would be a lot more. I know there are a lot more, but a lot of people don't keep track," he told the newspaper.

Jarzynka, who is semi-retired, does keep track — on graph paper. He rejects Strava or even a computer spreadsheet. "I like old graph paper. It doesn't take 10 seconds to write stuff down,"

he said. Jarzynka tracks date, distance, time, pace, temperature and the shoes he wore.

Most days the runs are solo adventures.

"I still consider myself a loner type. I'm not big with the crowds. I don't run with groups of people. I have a friend I run with, otherwise I'm out by myself. When you are running with someone else, what happens — and it's good at times — is you get competitive and start pushing," Jarzynka said.

## Ran against Fischer, Dunlap

In his prime, he was quite competitive. His marathon PR was in Sioux Falls in 1984 when he clocked a 2:22:43, which placed third. He had a couple runner-up finishes in the Black Hills Marathon, trailing former Prairie Strider Randy Fischer in 1982 and trailing Fischer's running partner Mike Dunlap, also a former Strider, in 1983.

Age has taken away his speed, but he considers himself blessed to still be able to run.

"When you are a runner, you are a runner for life. Some of it is luck. Some people have knee replacements or hip replacements or feet problems or plantar fasciitis or back issues and can't run anymore...."

"I've just been lucky that I can still go. It ain't pretty, but it gets done and I feel good at the end of the day."

Most of his runs are late afternoon or early evening along Highway 2, which goes through Cairo, a town of 800 people northwest of Grand Island.

Reaching the 100,000-mile milestone, doesn't mean Jarzynka plans on stopping. "It's just a regular part of my day."



Randy Jarzynka poses in his hometown of Cairo, Neb., where he has run many of his 100,000-plus lifetime miles. Jarzynka, 63, has been logging his miles since he was a high school sophomore and on Nov. 20 hit 100,000 miles.

# Striders debuts its electronic timing system

By Dave Graves  
Newsletter editor

Lukas Nelson became a footnote in Prairie Striders history when he became the first runner to cross the finish line of a Prairie Striders race that was timed by its own electronic system.

Nelson, a recent Jackrabbit 1,500-meter specialist, won the Hobo Day 5K Oct. 23 in 15:12.

It was the first race timed by the club's Race Result Decoder 5000s equipment.

After a receiving a bid of nearly \$1,500 to time the Hobo Day 5K, Jay Larsen, club treasurer and longtime life member, initiated research to purchase a timing system. Race Result was chosen because the value, very favorable customer reviews and efficiencies for set-up and operation.

The timing system processes the runner's bib transponders through the ground mat antenna cables connected to the decoder box to process timing and transmit data results calculations to a laptop computer. The basic system uses one finish line mat and uses a common starting time, Larsen said.

With a \$5,000 price tag, it won't take too many uses to equalize its cost. Larsen commented, "Prairie Striders races have reasonable runner race fees, and any net race proceeds are donated to designated non-profit organizations or to the SDSU Prairie Striders Scholarship."

When the system arrived Oct. 2, Larsen hoped it would take 15 to 20 hours to learn the system and to perform the needed steps to get it ready for use. Actually, it was more like 50 hours, including many hours spent by Brett Pettigrew at the Larsen household. Chuck Harming provided assistance with a "test" of the hardware.

"Set-up instructions were not a simple one-two-three process. The instructions were scattered throughout various weblinks," Larsen said.

He and Pettigrew had two "test" races set-up on the laptop using Race Result software and race simulations before they were satisfied the timing system was fully functional for the Hobo Day 5K set-up and could be "checked-out" to go offline (no internet) to the decoder box.

On race morning, new entries were put into the timing base right up to 15 minutes before race time so the laptop was moved to be connected to the decoder at the finish line. Last-minute entries can be added to the system during the race, Larsen said.

A total of 287 runners and walkers cross over the finish mat, in some cases in bunches and with bibs covered by coats. The system captured each one.

Race officials were prepared for the worst with several backup timing systems in use — the Webscorer app on a tablet, a phone camera recording the finishers and handwriting bib numbers and times. First-year race director Randy Hanson was thankful they weren't needed.

"Since we have never used the new Race Results system we wanted to make sure we had a backup just in case. All three systems recorded the results but only Race Results was needed. Next year we will only use the Race Results system and have a video camera running just in case.

"I am so thankful to Jay and Brett for all their work in making sure the system recorded correctly. I am also thankful to Prairie Striders for buying the system and letting us use it. This will simplify the registration process, the operations at



A runner crosses the ground mat at the Hobo Day 5K Oct. 23.

the finish line and the final results posting in all our races going forward. Next year we will have the breakdowns by age and gender for people to use," Hanson said.

Formal purchase of the system came Nov. 2 after the club received the favorable Hobo Day report. It had reserved the right to just pay a rental price.

Also at the Nov. 2 Prairie Striders meeting, it was agreed there would be no charge for a Prairie Striders race to use the timing system. However, the race will need to foot the price of bibs and the software processing of the bibs (15 cents per bib). Customized bibs (\$1.22/bib) with the Prairie Striders logo are to be purchased.

By consensus, it was agreed not to use the timing system for non-Prairie Striders races. Factors here are the need to train more people before that could be feasible and the need for the club to price the service at a fair and equitable rate, which is not determinable at this time.

One of the club's goals for 2022 is to train at least four more people to become comfortable using the timing system.

People having an interest should contact Larsen at [larsenjk@brookings.net](mailto:larsenjk@brookings.net) or 605.695.0063.

## PS demographics

As of March 30, 2021	2	20-29	1%
The age groups totals:	17	30-39	11%
	18	40-49	12%
	34	50-59	22%
	43	60-69	27%
	24	70-79	15%
	15	80-89	10%
	3	90-99	2%
	1	100+	

The 157 member list (included Jerry Bergum-Shirley paid in 2021) is not accurate for the membership since there are many younger (60 and under) members who have not paid in 2021 and previously paid when birthdate was not on the form.

In summary, 54% of members are age 60 or older, 76% are age 50 or older with 24% in the 20-49 age group. Youngest Lukas Nelson-24 (4/5/1997) and Boyd Shank at 107 (11/16/1914).



# Striders honor Eggebraaten as 2019 Friend of Running

Lou Eggebraaten was recognized as the Friend of Running for 2019 by Prairie Striders Running Club at its Farewell to Frost Frolic April 5 at Wooden Legs Brewing Co., downtown Brookings.

The 2019 presentation was delayed until 2020 because COVID-19 precautions shut down social gatherings before the award could be presented.

Eggebraaten, of Brookings, was the first female president of Prairie Striders, serving two one-year terms in 1980 and '81. Most recently, she served as greeter and coordinator for the club's 50th anniversary gathering at the South Dakota Art Museum Sept. 28, 2019.

Her involvement with the club began in the late 1970s.

Charter member Bob Bartling recalls, "Running and jogging had just caught the fancy of the world and we somehow acquired 850-some members. In those days there wasn't such things as address labels. Those first years we had always enclosed a stamped, return-addressed envelope with our dues notice. Postage was 3 cents. Initially, the mailing was really not a big deal.

"However, 850 members all of a sudden changed the picture. Lou to the rescue. She knew the mechanics of mailing and even though it still took hours and days to get that mailing out, we did it thanks to Lou."

She knew the mechanics because, professionally, Eggebraaten was the secretary for the Brookings High School department of student activities and administrative assistant for three athletics directors, serving for 36 years (1970-2006).

Eggebraaten also served as secretary to Longest Day Marathon director Scotty Roberts after her terms as club president expired.

Bartling also recalled that Eggebraaten served with Prairie Striders life member Steve Hauff as race directors for the inaugural and short-lived Fall Badlands, a 14.8-mile race sponsored by Wall Drug in October 1979. Bartling was among about 10 Prairie Strider members in the 32-runner field.

About 15 minutes before the starting gun, race sponsor Bill Husted had two waitresses each armed with a tray filled with Wall Drug doughnuts pass among the assembling runners. "The runners were in such a state of shock that most of them took one in each hand and began gobbling them down. It actually was just another clue as to why the Wall Drug management needed a knowledgeable race director," Bartling recalled.

In addition to helping with Strider races, Eggebraaten assisted in the organization and administration of local invitational and Eastern South Dakota Athletic Conference



Selected for Prairie Striders' Friend of Running Award was Dave Graves (2020) and Lou Eggebraaten (2019). The pair were honored April 5 at Wooden Legs Brewing Co. The 2019 announcement was delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

cross country and track and field meets hosted by BHS as well as state cross country meets.

Eggebraaten's service has been honored by local and South Dakota sports organizations. She received the Bobcat Backers Award of Merit and was inducted to the Brookings High School Sports Hall of Fame. In addition, she is the only administrative assistant whose service was recognized with the Eastern South Dakota Athletics Conference Award of Merit.

Eggebraaten's employment at Brookings High School coincided with South Dakota High School Activities Association sanctioning of girls' athletics. BHS hosted many of the early girls' state tournaments, and she facilitated the management of state tournaments in tennis, golf, cross country and gymnastics as well as the formation of the Alpha V Conference, which was the first girls athletics conference in South Dakota.

## Member Spotlight



### Chris Gruenhagen

**Age:** 37

**Residence:** Brookings

**Occupation:** Principal/Teacher/Coach

**Family:** Wife: Lauren, Sons: Otto (4 1/2), Gus (2 1/2), Puppy: Bokeh (7)

**Years as a Prairie Strider member:** 13

**Why you're a member:** Running is a big part of my life and the Prairie Striders is a fantastic organization that promotes and supports the local running community.

**What you enjoy about running:** Running gives me the opportunity to unplug, let the mind wander while enjoying the simple sounds of nature or my feet on the earth below me.

### Favorite running memory:

High School: Finishing third on the Mankato West cross country team that perfect-scored the 2001 state-qualifying section 2AA meet.

Collegiate: 2007 Drake Relays 5,000 meters, 14:45.70

Post Collegiate: Ragnar Great River Relay with some fellow Jackrabbit Alumni

**Your favorite Prairie Striders race:** Beef and Eggs 5K.

**Favorite workout:** Currently, Fartlek sessions on the roads, with time intervals ranging from 2-5 minutes.

**Your running goal:** Continue to consistently run, and challenge myself physically and mentally through running.



**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.

# Gruenhagen named inspiring coach by Brooks

Brookings High School cross country coach Chris Gruenhagen has been named by Brooks running company as one of its "Inspiring Coaches of the Year."

The 2007 South Dakota State University graduate and Prairie Striders race director has been coaching at BHS since 2008 and also is the principal at Medary Elementary School. He was nominated by Emily Berzonsky, a 2019 SDSU grad who was at Brookings High School for her freshman and sophomore years.

She wrote, "In the middle of my sophomore year of track, my parents informed me that I would be moving away with the family because of a new job. Out of all the people I would have to share this information with, I dreaded most telling my team and Coach Gruenhagen.

"One day after practice I finally mustered up the courage, however, after saying, "I have to tell you something," I began laughing uncontrollably yet also somehow crying at the same time.

"Coach Gruenhagen took me aside and waited for me to calm down and tell him what was wrong. His response was everything that I needed to hear. He reminded me that I still had the opportunity for a great track season and that wherever I went next, they would be lucky to have me. And what meant the most to me was that he promised to be my fan and follow my career.

"He was true to his word. As I found success at my new school, Coach Gruenhagen reached out to see how I was doing. I informed him of every PR and good race. His encouragement meant the world to me. He even Tweeted about my success through the team Twitter account as if I was still a team member.

## Coach became a 'friend for life'

"I continued to grow as an athlete and ultimately committed to run Division I cross country and track and field at Coach Gruenhagen's alma mater. He continued to cheer me on, oftentimes in person. Hearing his familiar coaching advice and 'Go Berzy!' (his endearing nickname for me, a nickname I still use to this day) every race meant so much to me.

"Moving halfway through high school was a stressful experience, but knowing that I had a coach, cheerleader and friend for life eased the transition and helped me to be confident in the web of love and support that I have today.

"I am forever thankful to Coach Gruenhagen for the kindness and understanding that he showed me during my moving experience. I am inspired by his lifetime commitment to his athletes."

## Coach: It's all about relationships

Gruenhagen said, "I think it's pretty special to find out that a student-athlete I was fortunate to coach many years ago continues to view the experiences they had on our teams as impactful on their life long term."

The coach says his coaching philosophy is one built on relationships with the athletes.

"Building relationships with our student-athletes is a



primary part of our program," Gruenhagen said. "Being able to connect with each runner assists in finding what drives them and aids in the ability to push them to find the most out of themselves."

## Following inspiration of other coaches

Gruenhagen's ability to inspire and connect with his runners is in part influenced by the coaches he had at Mankato (Minn.) West High School and SDSU.

"I was very fortunate to have an incredible group of coaches throughout my running career," Gruenhagen said. "Scott Carlson, Matt Kolb and Jim Bassett really set the tone for me in middle school and high school. All three of them knew how to build relationships, hold expectations and get the best out of every athlete that they worked with.

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*"High school coaches do more than shape our runs - they shape our lives. Your community is a better and stronger place because of your commitment."  
-Brooks running company on Chris Gruenhagen*

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"These gentlemen really created the foundation for the hard work and dedication to running that has become such a huge part of my life. Without their mentorship I would have never ended up running at South Dakota State University and certainly not become a coach.

"Coaches Paul Danger and Rod DeHaven at SDSU truly fostered my love for running," Gruenhagen added. "Their ability to connect running with life made a huge impact in my decision to pursue teaching and coaching.

"From the relationships to the workouts, the primary foundation of the way that I coach was built by the opportunities I was fortunate to have under these coaches and the lessons they taught me along the way."

A statement from Brooks running company said the same thing about Gruenhagen.

"At Brooks, we recognize that high school coaches do more than shape our runs - they shape our lives. Your community is a better and stronger place because of your commitment."

# Member Spotlight



## Deb Leiferman

**Age:** 62

**Residence:** Brookings, SD

**Occupation:** Instructor in the SDSU Math Department

**Family:** Husband Pete, children David and Amy

**Years as a Prairie Strider member:** Mmmmm.....maybe 30 years

**Why you're a member:** Because of the joyful and uplifting people. I so appreciate the comradery and encouragement of my fellow runners!

**What you enjoy about running:** Running allows me to enjoy the beauty of nature and gives me a more complete perspective of my surroundings, it refreshes me mentally and physically. Running can be meditative and prayerful or fun and social.

## Favorite running memory:

The time I was running in the evening and Pete came home from the farm and started following me slowly in the farm van. The oncoming vehicle was clearly concerned about the "creeper" following me and I had to assure him that it was only my husband!

or My daughter Amy ran her first 5K, the Arbor Day 5K, when she was about 7 years old. Though I encouraged her to start at a slower pace, she started out at a pretty good clip and soon ran out of gas. She slowed down and to her credit finished the race. or Watching my son David win the mile run during the elementary school track meet.

or Encouraging each other and loving the comradery with my running buddies on relay teams. Go Turtles! Go Sole Sisters!

**Your favorite Prairie Striders race:** Hobo Day 5K

**Favorite workout:** Running on the first days of spring.

**Your running goal:** To be a runner my whole life!

**Side note:** Chris Gruenhagen was my student at SDSU.